Curriculum Design Guide

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RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Academic Framework Regulations

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

Academic Framework Regulations

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Curriculum Design Guide

2018/19

Contents

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help programme teams plan and review their programmes. The guide provides practical support within a framework of principles of curriculum design that embrace LJMU, as well as national, regulations and guidelines. It is designed to help programme leaders identify key issues to discuss with their teams; areas that require thought and resolution before students start the programme. Within the text there are brief explanations of points, with links to examples, checklists, further information and resources.

Where to start?

There are many pressures on curriculum design – responding to external requirements, whether professional or government driven, incorporating LJMU initiatives, creating and maintaining a 'market', delivering content and developing learners. Very few programme teams are able to start from scratch - most programmes are developed from existing programmes and modules. Even within these constraints there are fundamental questions that need to be debated. It is suggested, therefore, that at an early stage as many staff as possible are engaged in discussions and activities that will help with the design of the programme.

Although there is no agreed definitive list of principles of curriculum design a **useful set of principles** could be that:

A well designed curriculum is:

- holistic and coherent
- inclusive / accessible / student centred
- one that fosters a deep approach to learning, encouraging independence in learning
- based upon / has links to research / scholarship
- based on feedback, evaluation and review.

A well designed curriculum takes account of:

- its market / its intake / its output
- its learning environment/resources/staffing
- national and LJMU requirements.

These principles relate to LJMU's Strategic Plan with its key outcomes for Outstanding Student Experience, Excellence in Education, Impactful Research and Scholarship, and Civic and Global Engagement that include being:

- A *university that places students at the heart of its endeavour*
- *A university that offers an enriching student experience characterised by social diversity, cultural relevance and a global perspective*
- *A university that delivers a transformative education, marked by enquiry, discovery and partnership between students and staff*

- *A university with innovative and creative approaches to learning that harness the potential of technology*
- *A university that embeds the knowledge, skills and experience valued by employers, and*
- *A university that cultivates an inclusive and accessible academic environment* (LJMU Strategic Plan, 2017-22)

LJMU curriculum requirements

Programme teams need to take into account LJMU curriculum requirements. The most important are:

1. **LJMU's Strategic Plan https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/our-vision**; and
2. **LJMU's Teaching and Learning Strategy Accessible from LJMU's Policy Centre: https://policies.ljmu.ac.uk/UserHome/Policies/PolicyDisplay.aspx?&id=170&l=1**

A key aim of the Strategic Plan 2017-22, as stated above, is to deliver excellence in education. Curriculum design is, therefore, essential to achieving part of the Plan's objectives.

The Academic Framework regulations

All programmes leading to an LJMU award are expected to operate within the Academic Framework. The regulations can be found at https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations . Each year there may be amendments to the regulations and every five years there is a full review of the Framework. During 2014-15 the Academic Framework underwent a fundamental review covering credit size and assessment regulations. This guide takes account of the regulatory changes. For details about the requirements of Periodic Programme Review and validation to existing programmes please contact the Faculty Quality Enhancement Officers or Faculty Registrars.

The major changes to the Framework were:

1 **Semesterisation**: Academic delivery to be semesterised. This means that programmes will follow a standard academic year which is defined as a period of study divided into two semesters each of up to 15 weeks.

The requirement for semesterisation applies to:

- All undergraduate programmes of greater than 240 credits
- All postgraduate taught programmes of greater than 120 credits

Referred and deferred assessment items will be completed at the end of the academic year. Year-long delivery may be permitted through a formal exception process.

What does semesterisation mean in practice?

Most modules will be delivered in a single semester. The following exceptions are permitted within the Academic Framework:

- Level 6 and Level 7 research modules
- Level 6 and Level 7 work related and work based learning modules

- Level 4 skills development modules
- Level 3 skills development modules.

There are no permitted exceptions at Level 5.

These permitted exceptions require the programme leader to explain at validation and review why the programme requires a year-long module and how their module(s) meet(s) the exception description. For internal LJMU programmes such exceptions will be recorded in the validation documentation and formally signed off at Validation. For exceptions for collaborative programmes these will be included in the validation outcomes and reported to the Collaborative Quality and Standards Panel.

Any programme team wanting year-long delivery in modules other than those listed above will be required to seek approval via the variance process. (see section 2.4)

Assessment periods will be scheduled at the end of each semester with referred and deferred assessment from both semesters taking place in the usual referral period at the end of the academic year.

2 Number of summative assessment items: normally one summative assessment task per 10 credit module; maximum of two for 20 credit modules.

This change recognises that the division of the curriculum into modules of a smaller credit size with single semester delivery could lead to an increase in assessment and therefore limits the number of assessment tasks per module. The University has produced guidance on the typical assessment loading per module:

Formal examinations

Credit value	Weighting of assessment	Typical length
20	80-100%	3 hours
20	50-79%	2 hours
20	under 50%	1.5 hours
10	100%	1.5 hours

Written Coursework

Credit value	Weighting of assessment	Typical length
20	100%	4,500 words
20	80-99%	3,500 words
20	50-80%	2,500 words
20	under 50%	2,000 words
10	100%	2,500 words

Exceptions: Level 6 40 credit dissertation module: typical word length 10,000 excluding references, appendices, figures and tables.
Level 7 60 credit dissertation module: typical word length 15,000 excluding references, appendices, figures and tables.

Presentations/artefacts/performance

Credit value	Weighting of assessment	Typical number
20	100%	1
20	50-99%	2
10	100%	1

Academic staff should use their professional judgement in determining an '*essay-equivalent workload*' for non-essay coursework activities, for example laboratory and field reports. Professional judgement should also be used when using multiple assessment types in a module.

Portfolios

Where a portfolio is included as an assessment component it is expected that the word count of all the separate items included within the portfolio would not exceed the word count of an identically weighted coursework item. Where all, or some, of the separate items are not comparable to a written coursework item programme teams are expected to carefully consider the assessment load of the portfolio for students so that the portfolio does not become out of line with the guidance for other assessment components; that is the portfolio should not be used to assess students several times within the one 'official' assessment component.

3 Module credit size

10 or 20 credits with the provision for up to 40 credits at Level 6 and 60 credits at Level 7 in undergraduate Masters' programmes for the research project. The research project module will ordinarily be delivered in 'year-long' mode [cf. Section 2.1]. Please note that 'up to 40 credits at Level 6' means that 30 credit modules at Level 6 are permitted.

Postgraduate taught modules will normally be 10, 20 or 30 credits except for the research project/dissertation which must be 60 credits.

4 Variance process

Modules greater than 20 credits at Levels 4 and 5; or greater than 40 credits at Level 6; or greater than 60 credits at Level 7 may be permitted through the formal variance process. The criteria for variance have been revised to include consideration of variances to module size and delivery where there are external statutory body, agency requirements, or 'other academic conditions' such as specific subject or disciplinary sector practice. Applications for variance in relation to student progression or attainment will only be considered against agreed criteria that the variance is a nationally published condition of an accredited / professional body, without which the programme could not be accredited. All applications for variance require full details on the alternative arrangements, a clear rationale for the variance and full supporting evidence.

5 Number of modules per level: A maximum of seven modules per level with only two 10 credit modules permitted per level in a Bachelor's honours degree programme. A maximum of five modules at Level 7 of Undergraduate Masters programmes is permitted.

This change provides programme teams with some flexibility in curriculum design.

6 Compensation: the award of credit by compensation will be disallowed.

Students will be encouraged to pass first time.

7 Summative assessment: all summative assessment items must be attempted before credit can be released. Coursework waivers will not normally be permitted.

This is to ensure that all students make an attempt to engage with all learning outcomes. Curriculum design must ensure that students who pass the module, the level and the

programme have met the intended learning outcomes of the module, the level and the programme.

Completion of the CareerSmart: Explore assessment task is exempt from the requirement that all summative items must be attempted. The statement will not be the only assessment task associated with the learning outcome that is related to self-awareness and/or personal development and /or professional planning.

An attempt is defined as a submission whether of a coursework item or of an examination script. This means that a student could submit nothing but his/her name. If a student passes a module without an attempt credit will not be released and the outcome at the Assessment Board will be an exceptional fail. As an exceptional fail the student would then be required to resit the missing assessment item and their module mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark at the referral assessment board.

Programme teams will need to consider the assessment design in order to minimise the possibility of students making 'an attempt' at an assessment item that does not satisfy the intended learning outcome(s) associated with the assessment item whilst passing the module. Points to consider are the relative weighting of assessment items and the opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes more than once (i.e. the learning outcome is assessed more than once).

Coursework waivers are no longer allowed except in exceptional circumstances. For example, where the student has a learning needs assessment that requires a waiver of a particular assessment item. In these circumstances the student must have met the intended learning outcomes of the module via other or alternative assessment.

Pass mark: Levels 3 to 6 have a pass mark of 40%. Level 7 modules have a pass mark of 50% (including those that form part of UG Masters programmes).

Progression: In undergraduate programmes the threshold for progression is 100 credits at any level for progression. Students will not be able to progress to the next level of their programme if they do not have at least 100 credits at their current level.

8 **Final mark algorithm:** there will be no discounting of credits in the calculation of the final year qualifying mark.

Students will be encouraged to treat all modules equally.

9 **Ordinary degrees:** will be discontinued as an alternative exit award and only offered as a target award for closed client groups.

10 **Postgraduate Dissertations or projects**

A research project will be a core element of taught postgraduate programmes and must be supported by at least 10 credits of research skills. The research skills must be passed prior to the submission of the dissertation.

11 **Professional accreditation and employability**

Undergraduate Programmes of 240 credits or more are required to embed work related learning and world of work bronze at level 4.

In addition it is a target of the University's Learning Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy, 2012-2017 that every professional programme is recognised and accredited by the appropriate professional body.

12. Personal Development Planning (PDP)

PDP is 'a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and / or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development. It is an inclusive process, open to all learners, in all HE provision settings and at all levels' (QAA, 2009)

The minimum expectations for PDP at LJMU, Dec 2014, are that:

- it should support students' academic development and acquisition of appropriate study skills as well as students' vocational/employability-related development;
- it should promote students' wider engagement with and external to the programme of study, for example through participation in voluntary activities, internships, course representation;
- the programme's approach to PDP in terms of where and how it is supported must be clearly communicated to students and included in the Programme Guide;
- in all programmes Personal Development Planning (PDP) is introduced as part of induction/ transition at every level;
- every student must have an opportunity to review his/her progress at least twice an academic year in line with LJMU's Personal Tutoring Policy. The first such opportunity must be within the first six weeks of the start of the year / programme;
- all students registered on a LJMU HE award must be provided with opportunities for PDP at each stage of their programme but that these opportunities may be differentiated to take account of changing needs and expectations at each level;
- opportunities for PDP must be provided for students at all levels; for levels 3, 4 and 5 these must be within the curriculum supplemented with direction to additional support, where needed. For levels 6, 7 and 8 these opportunities may be within or without the curriculum;
- the Bronze stage (the Self Awareness statement) of the World of Work Skills Certificate Process is integrated into the Level 4 curriculum and forms part of a credit-bearing assessment.

13 Personal Tutoring

The minimum requirements for personal tutoring are:

- all students on LJMU award-bearing taught programmes will be allocated a named Personal Tutor who will be a member of academic staff from the Programme Team/subject area.
- in addition to any group tutorials or informal meetings, Personal Tutors will meet with their tutees individually at least twice per academic year for a progress review

Further information is available on the academic policy page on https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations

14 International strategy

In further developing an international profile and reputation, the University places particular emphasis upon:

- Welcoming and supporting students and staff from across the world
- Enabling students to engage international cultures to better prepare for life and the world of working in the 21st Century
- Developing partnerships of mutual and financial benefit with international universities and organisations
- Promoting international research collaboration and scholarship and producing outputs of international impact and significance.
- Embedding internationalisation across the University and celebrating diversity in culture and perspective.
- Supporting the interests of the Liverpool City region through the University's international expertise and global engagement activity.

LJMU Internationalisation Strategy 2017-2022

Implementation of curriculum design principles and requirements - what do these requirements mean in practical terms for a programme team?

Realistically a programme leader is likely to start thinking about curriculum design when the programme is about to come up for review or when s/he has an idea about a new programme. In both cases a 'programme specification' is required. The development of a programme specification should not be viewed as a bureaucratic chore. Consideration of the areas covered by a programme specification should be used as a starting point for discussion. It is vital that a programme team develops and shares a common approach to the purpose of the programme in order that the programme is academically coherent and can be justified to students and other interested external bodies. With the new Academic Framework it is particularly important that programme teams consider the sequencing and integration of curriculum content and assessment. Discussing a programme specification, within the context of the revised Academic Framework, offers the opportunity for teams to think holistically about the programme – a key principle of curriculum design.

Principle 1 - That the curriculum is holistic and coherent

The Academic Framework regards the programme as the primary focus of the student's learning experience. Programme teams should ensure that there is clarity, cohesion and connections in the programme between modules that are delivered in semesters. Staff and students should experience the curriculum as a whole, at the programme level, rather than as a collection of individual modules. During the early stages of reviewing and redesigning the curriculum the team should discuss broad questions about the purpose of the programme. Why does the team want to redesign the programme? What kind of student is the team hoping to develop?

Questions that could be used in discussion with the programme team:

- What should a student be able to do at the end of this programme?
- What are the most important intellectual/professional/creative/technical processes that a student will undertake on this programme?

- What are the skills, techniques, behaviours, professional practices that a student will develop?
- What distinguishes this programme of study in this University?
- On what does the academic content concentrate?
- What are the important values that inform this programme?
- How is the curriculum organised to ensure the above?
- How does the team view the process of learning vis-a-vis the content of learning?
- Does the team have a particular approach to the curriculum, why and how?
- Does the programme have a strategic approach to supporting students' employability within the curriculum and provide opportunities to help students work through the CareerSmart resources ?
- How does this programme of study relate to professional practice?
- Is this programme more than a collection of modules? How?
- What makes the level at which the programme is to be delivered appropriate?
- Does the programme match the benchmark statement https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
- Is it realistic to be able to design and offer new modules, if there are gaps?
- Is there a balance between breadth of study and depth of study? Is it better to cover a few areas in greater depth rather than to try to cover too many discrete topics? Does the balance between breadth and depth change as a student progresses?
- How is the curriculum content going to be sequenced?
- Will students see the connections between modules - how can connectivity be encouraged?
- Is the most obvious way of progressing the content necessarily the best way to engage students? For example, does theory have to be taught before its application – could trying to solve an issue / case study be a way of motivating students to engage with the theory?
- Is there an assumption that the primary mode of delivery will be lectures and the primary mode of assessment exams and essays, if so, why?
- Are the key principles/aims of the programme developed throughout the programme? Are complexity of knowledge and skills developed as the student progresses?
- Consider how 'real-world settings' could be used to engage learners
- How does the programme use technology to enhance learning?
- Is there a variety of teaching and assessment methods?
- Consider how the methods of delivery could help to develop confidence in students' ability to learn the subject, e.g. using problem solving activities, small tasks and immediate feedback early in a programme, working in tutorial groups, peer support and mentoring

The delivery and the assessment cannot be discussed in isolation from the aims of the modules and programme. It is essential, therefore, that the aims of the programme should be agreed by the whole programme team and importantly, embedded in the actions and words of the team.

It may be useful to get together a group of students, recent graduates, employers or placement hosts who could discuss a similar set of questions.

A lot of activity, therefore, has to take place before a programme team can begin to complete a programme specification.

"We teach a subject not to produce little living libraries on that subject, but rather to get a student to think mathematically for himself, to consider matters as a historian does, to take part in the process of knowledge-getting. Knowledge is a process, not a product."
(Bruner, 'Toward a Theory of Instruction', 1966, p72, Harvard University Press, quoted in Ramsden, 'Learning to Teach in Higher Education', 2000, Routledge, p115)

Developing a programme specification

Programme teams need to be sure that the programme outcomes are at the 'right' qualification level. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Part A of the Quality Code (Nov 2014) accessible here: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards provides qualification descriptors which give a statement of outcomes that a student should be able to demonstrate for the award of a particular qualification. The descriptors also include a statement of the wider abilities that a typical student could be expected to have developed. These descriptors may be of use when discussing programme outcomes.

A programme specification is a concise description of the intended outcomes of learning from a programme, and the means by which these outcomes are achieved and demonstrated. Programme specifications are publicly available documents available to students, applicants, employers and other interested parties. It is essential that that they are accurate and clear in their description of the programme.

A programme specification should identify potential stopping-off points and give the intended learning outcomes of the programme in terms of:

- the knowledge and understanding that a student will be expected to have upon completion;
- cognitive skills, such as an understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis;
- subject specific skills, such as laboratory skills;
- transferable / personal development / practical skills: communication, numeracy, the use of information technology and learning how to learn.

Programme outcomes must include knowledge, understanding and skills that are acquired cumulatively throughout the programme. At each level there must be intended level outcomes so that there is an articulation of progression within the programme.

Programme aims

The aims of the programme are the broad purposes or goals of the programme. The intended learning outcomes are what students should be able to know and do as a result of engaging in the programme.

Every LJMU award programme must have stated programme outcomes. The programme team should discuss and agree on the aims and outcomes of a programme which will be included on the programme specification.

Subject benchmark statements

Subject benchmark statements, where available, can provide a helpful starting point when considering programme outcomes. Subject benchmark statements are not, however, intended to be draft programme outcomes. Rather, they should be used as a stimulus to reflection and a reference against which individual programme specifications may be justified. The benchmark statements allow flexibility and innovation in programme design within an overall conceptual framework established by an academic subject community. https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements

Learning Outcomes

Programmes seek to establish a clear link between student inputs in terms of learning activity, and student achievements in terms of learning outcomes. Thus, learning activity is defined as the amount of time needed for the 'average' student to achieve the defined learning outcomes for a module. In defining credit in terms of full-time learning activity, the longer academic year undertaken by postgraduates (between 45 and 48 weeks) as compared to undergraduates (30 weeks) has been taken into account.

A learning outcome is a statement of that which a learner is expected to be able to do or know at the end of his/her study. Learning outcomes are written for all modules and programmes operating within the Academic Framework. It is expected that learning outcomes should also be written for levels within the award programmes. Both modules and programmes must have defined learning outcomes.

Writing learning outcomes

What should a student be able to do and know after successfully completing the module? Which of the outcomes are essential? If a student was not able to do or know a particular thing would the student fail the module? Check whether the outcomes are assessable. Sometimes the method of expression that a student uses to demonstrate his/her knowledge can itself be assessed as the development of a skill, e.g., making a presentation, working as part of a group, using specialist computer software, conducting an interview, etc. If this is the case then the use of such a skill could be a separate learning outcome with assessment attached to it, in addition to the knowledge used in the presentation or software. Many modules will have learning outcomes that demonstrate both knowledge and skills, even if the two are combined in one function. The language used should be clear and concise. Staff may like to check with students that the learning outcomes and the module description in general, correspond to their understanding of the module. Check that the relationship between learning outcomes and assessment is clear.

A well written learning outcome statement should contain an active verb, an object and a qualifying clause or phrase that provides a context or condition.

Outcomes should:

- Be written in the future tense;
- Identify important learning requirements;
- Be achievable and assessable;
- Use clear language, understandable by students and other potential readers;
- Relate to explicit statements of achievement.

The verb must describe what students should be able to do. It has to be an observable and assessable function. Non-specific verbs and phrases such as 'understand', 'be familiar with', 'appreciate', and 'comprehend' should be avoided. Alternative active verbs include: predict, select, compare, describe, define, demonstrate, calculate, formulate, maintain, diagnose, explain and identify. There are many lists of appropriate verbs available, mostly based on Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning Objectives* (1956) which identified 6 levels of the 'cognitive domain', each subsuming the last:

Knowledge:	recall, define, state, list, repeat, name, present, find, recount
Comprehension :	identify, discuss, locate, recognise, review, explain, clarify, restate
Application:	demonstrate, operate, sketch, employ, use, practise, solve, illustrate, interpret, apply, solve
Analysis:	distinguish, differentiate, appraise, debate, calculate, compare, contrast, examine, experiment, criticise, test, discriminate
Synthesis:	formulate, design, develop, create, propose, construct, arrange, manage
Evaluation:	appraise, choose, assess, value, measure, criticise, judge

The outcomes approach requires module and programme teams to consider the following questions:

- What do we intend students to achieve?
- What curriculum design and delivery will encourage students to behave in ways that are likely to achieve these outcomes?
- What assessment tasks and criteria are suitable for considering whether the students have achieved the intended outcomes?

An example of module learning outcomes at Level 5:

On completion of this module a student should be able to:

- Analyse primary source material on aspects of UK government policy between 1918 and 1939
- Demonstrate a critical application of knowledge of UK government policy between 1918 and 1939
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of key arguments of analysts in relation to specific UK government policies between 1918 and 1939.

How many learning outcomes?

The Academic Framework does not prescribe the number of learning outcomes that a module must have. Usually a 20 credit module would have between three and five learning outcomes. It is acceptable to have more, or fewer, depending on the particular requirements of the content and method of delivery of the module.

Unnecessary overlap between learning outcomes within a programme should be avoided. It is reasonable to assess a learning outcome more than once; for example, the assessment of skills and competencies such as communication, using equipment safely or the ability to develop argument and analysis. In addition it is important that the programme enables students to demonstrate successful completion of all module and programme learning outcomes and that students cannot avoid assessment on a specific learning outcome through their choice of examination question or coursework topic. Assessment items cannot be replaced with an alternative assessment if the

student does not have the opportunity to attempt the associated learning outcome(s) elsewhere in the level.

When considering overlap within a programme, module teams will want to consider how the module relates to the aims of the programme(s) it serves. If there are any learning outcomes that do not contribute to the programme learning outcomes/level outcomes they should not be included in the module.

How do learning outcomes differ according to levels?

As students progress through their programme of study they should be developing their skills and abilities, which ought to be reflected in the learning outcomes. There are several hierarchies of learning and many tables have been produced to help staff equate learning outcomes to levels. To determine the level of learning various descriptors have been devised. The University advises staff to consult The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) (Part A of the Quality Code, Nov 2014). The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards

The essential difference between qualification descriptors, the FHEQ, and level descriptors is that the former relate to whole qualifications and encompass all qualifications at a particular level. Level descriptors are essentially aids to programme development by describing broad outcomes whilst qualification descriptors are aids to the quality assurance of programmes and terminal qualifications. SEEC (a consortium of universities and HE providers) has developed Credit Level Descriptors which were first published in 2010 but were updated in 2016. These can be accessed from the resources section of the SEEC website and are also available here: http://www.seec.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SEEC-descriptors-2016.pdf

Other useful information that can help with the writing of learning outcomes can be found in resources detailing Bloom's taxonomy of learning, for example: https://teaching.uncc.edu/services-programs/teaching-guides/course-design/blooms-educational-objectives and http://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/~steve/best/bloom.html

Biggs and Collis's SOLO taxonomy may also be useful: http://www.johnbiggs.com.au/academic/solo-taxonomy/

Aligning learning outcomes with assessment

The table below shows how learning outcomes align with assessment tasks. The tasks listed are those most appropriate for the learning outcomes. Higher level tasks may be used to assess lower level outcomes and with careful design lower level tasks may be used to assess higher level outcomes.

Outcomes; the successful student is able to:	**Examples of appropriate summative assessment tasks:**
Level Three	
Recall, describe, identify [parts, features, key elements]. The student can recall acquired knowledge, facts, methods, procedures and knowledge within a narrow range of basic concepts and principles.	Multiple choice questions; Canvas quiz; class exercises; test.

Demonstrate, explain, review, summarise [key concepts, basic processes] The student has the ability to understand the meaning of clearly defined material; carry out basic processes; undertake routine tasks; interpret charts/graphs, estimate future consequences implied in the data.	Concept note; field and laboratory notebooks; field and laboratory reports; discussion board; short answer questions; essays; tests.
Level Four	
Describe, identify, recognise [parts, features, key elements] The student can recall acquired knowledge, facts, methods, procedures and knowledge of basic concepts and principles.	Class exercises; Canvas quiz; multiple choice questions; extended matching questions; research plan/proposal; test.
Explain, summarise [key concepts, processes] The student has the ability to understand the meaning of material; interpret charts/graphs, estimate future consequences implied in the data.	Concept note; field and laboratory notebooks; field and laboratory reports; discussion board; project feasibility study; short answer questions.
Level Five	
Apply The student can use existing knowledge in new situations e.g. to solve problems where there are single or best solutions; apply laws and theories to a practical situation.	Learning plan; project management documentation; practical report; problem based learning exercise; progress report; software exercise; teaching practice.
Analyse The student can understand complex structures by the identification of parts and their relationships; recognise assumptions; think critically.	Briefing paper; case study analysis; personal journal; discussion board; precis; research journal; software manual page; statistical assignment, interpretative questions.
Level Six	
Synthesise The student can put parts together to form a new whole i.e. the creative use of elements of knowledge and skills; construct an argument; integrate new knowledge, write a well-argued paper or speech; propose research design that will test a hypothesis.	Essay; group presentation; learning diary; open book exam; a discussion board; programming project; poster presentation; scientific report; software assignment; synthesis paper; production of an artefact or performance with commentary.
Evaluate The student can make adjustments based on the value of evidence and material for a given purpose. Answers are likely to be complex and various. This outcome contains or implies all preceding outcomes.	Dissertation; project report; lecture; literature review; portfolio; reflective essay; review paper; reflective and evaluative commentary on a performance or artefact.
Level Seven	
Analyse, synthesise, evaluate	Project or research report; performance or artefact; software development
Level Eight	
Create and Innovate	Original research project or report; performance or artefact; software

Adapted from: Teaching, Learning and Development Unit, University of Sussex.

Curriculum mapping

Curriculum mapping or auditing is a good way to stimulate discussion about coherence. The intended learning outcomes, the delivery and assessment methods that are in use or are proposed could be recorded on a programme grid, which will then show any imbalances. Although curriculum maps are

not required as part of a programme specification they provide a useful tool for programme design and review.

An example of a curriculum map follows:

Example of a Curriculum Map for [name of programme]

This map provides a design aid to help staff identify where the programme outcomes are being developed and assessed within the programme. It also provides a check list for quality assurance purposes and could be used in validation, review, accreditation and external examining processes. The map makes the learning outcomes transparent. In this way it also helps students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the programme progresses. The map shows the main measurable learning outcomes.

		Programme outcomes																							
Modules	**Codes**	**A 1**	**A 2**	**A 3**	**A 4**	**A 5**	**A 6**	**B 1**	**B 2**	**B 3**	**B 4**	**B 5**	**B 6**	**C 1**	**C 2**	**C 3**	**C 4**	**C 5**	**C 6**	**D 1**	**D 2**	**D 3**	**D 4**	**D 5**	**D 6**
Level 4 - -																									
Level 5 - - -																									
Level 6 - - -																									
Level 7																									

Knowledge and understanding A1 A2 A3	**Professional practical skills** C1 C2 C3
Intellectual skills B1 B2 B3	**Transferable/ key skills** D1 D2 D3

A process of mapping will show which programme outcomes are fulfilled by which modules. It enables programme teams to see whether:

- any outcomes are too heavily weighted, (e.g. if an outcome occurs in several modules)
- any outcomes are insufficiently addressed; (e.g. can a student avoid a key outcome by a particular choice of modules?)
- there any learning outcomes that do not contribute to the programme learning outcomes/level outcomes? If so why are they included?
- there is any unnecessary duplication of content and delivery
- all students are given sufficient opportunity to achieve all the outcomes; (e.g. is a key outcome assessed by examination(s) only and can it be avoided by a student's choice of answers)
- the programme is balanced and coherent.

Assessment and delivery methods could also be mapped. Bunching of assessments and over assessment are areas of concern for students. Mapping the number, type and deadlines of assessment will allow the programme team to consider whether there is unnecessary overlap and duplication of assessment and whether there is too heavy a reliance on a particular method of assessment.

In considering the match of learning outcomes with their assessment tasks and scheduling within modules programme teams may find it helpful to consider:

- how the organisation and delivery of the curriculum are linked to the scheduled assessment activities;
- assessment activities across the programme so that assessment activities in one module complement those in other modules;
- ensuring that students have clear information about the timing of individual assessments and how they relate to one another and to the overall programme assessment, where appropriate;
- how to ensure that the assessment tasks are reasonable for the likely hours of work expected within the private study time available;
- how to ensure that students have sufficient opportunities to show the extent to which they achieve the learning outcomes, while simultaneously promoting efficiency ensuring that assessment loads for students and staff are realistic and not over-burdensome;
- emphasising assessment for student learning, especially through formative assessment;
- whether students taking joint or combined programmes experience larger amounts of assessment than those taking single subjects;
- the variety of assessment methods;
- whether students have adequate time to reflect on learning before being assessed. It is particularly important for students to have opportunities to practise skills, especially in vocational programmes involving fitness to/for practice;
- the time available between completion of an assessment task by a student and the date at which the results are required, either by the student or the institution, to ensure that those

involved in marking student work have enough time to complete it satisfactorily. This can be particularly important in relation to final results.

This exercise can only be undertaken when all module proformas are completed and then the Programme Leader needs to discuss any issues with module leaders. Therefore the proformas should be produced in a timely fashion.

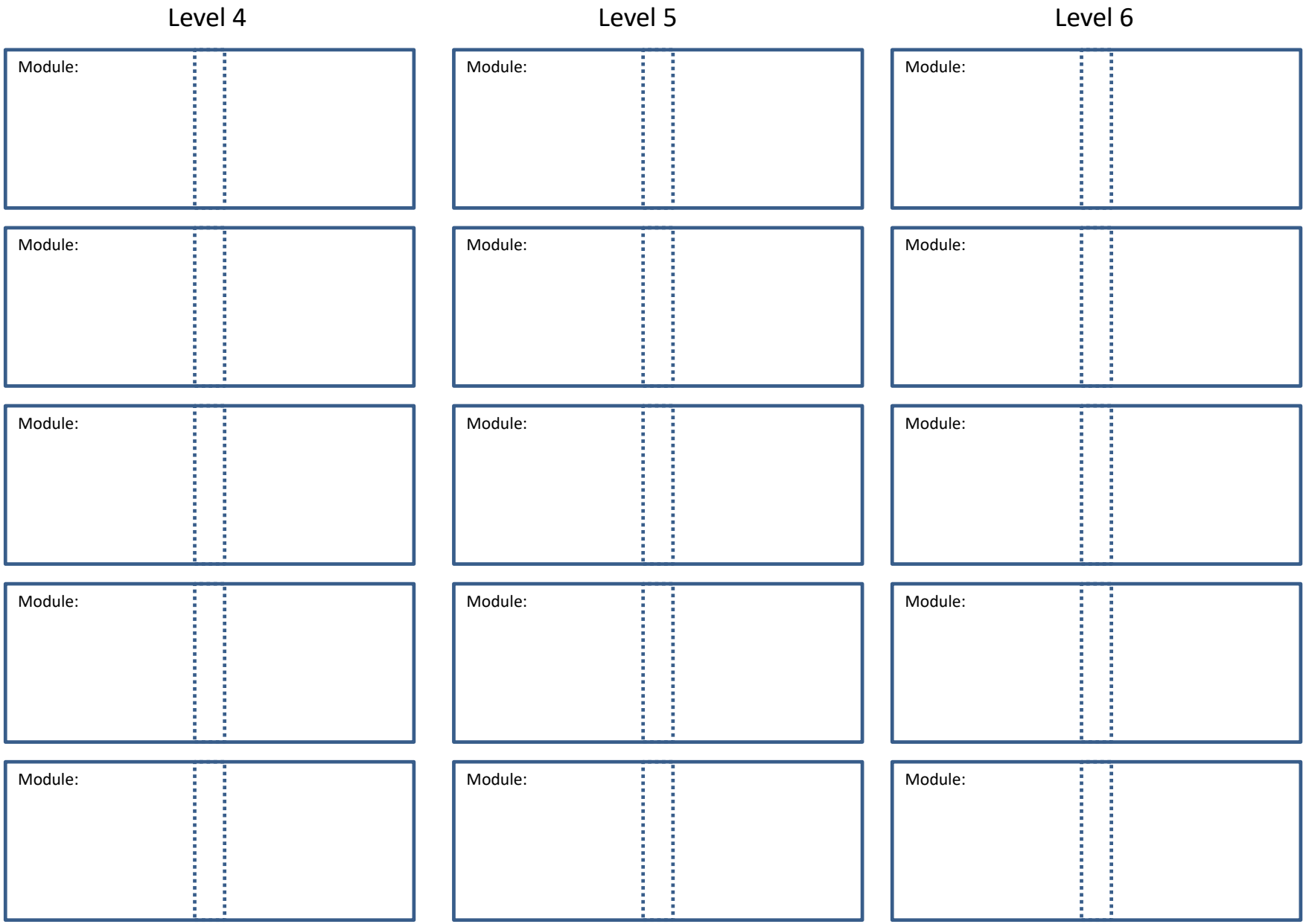
At the same time it is useful to also undertake a feedback mapping exercise. Using the template overleaf, the assessment for each module is listed and then the links between the assessments can be easily identified. An example is given on the following page.

Assessment may be valid, reliable, fair and transparent but could fail to improve learning because it cannot be adequately resourced or managed efficiently. Alternatively the assessment chosen may be an efficient use of resources but may not be valid in assessing the learning outcomes or may not help students learn; e.g. an assessment via 100% examination where a student can omit the question on a key learning outcome and still pass, or where there is too high an emphasis on memory recall.

There will be some learning outcomes where it is reasonable for them to be assessed more than once; for example, the assessment of skills and competencies such as communication, using equipment safely or argument and analysis.

Shared modules between different programmes

Some programmes share modules and it is harder to map and change assessment when a module contributes to several programmes. Is the student experience different? Are the assessment outcomes better for one programme than another? Does the performance of students from different programmes vary? Check the appropriate *WebHub* and student survey data. Do the students experience the module differently according to their programme? Is the workload comparable?


Level 4
Level 5
Level 6
Module:
Module:
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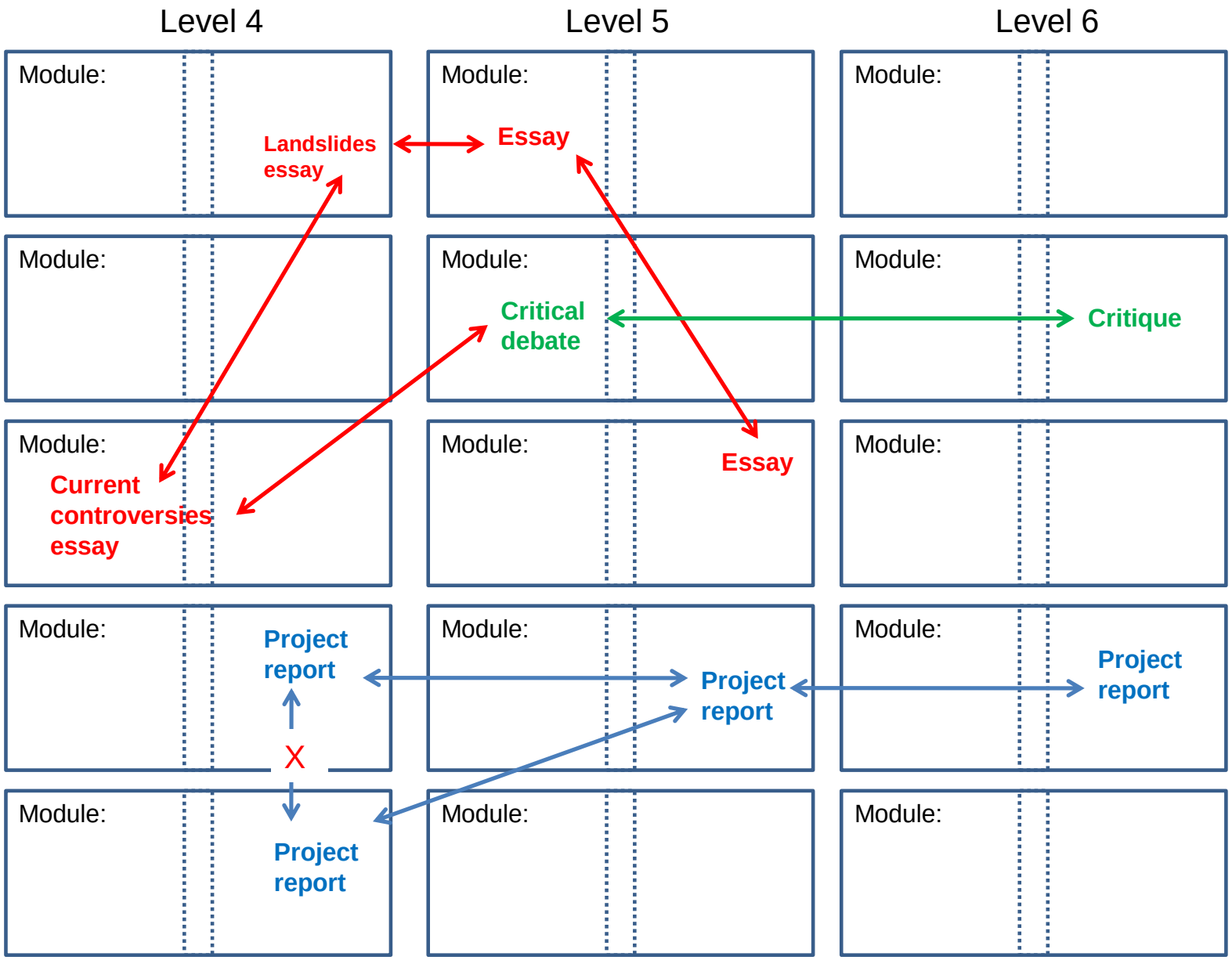

Level 4
Level 5
Level 6
Module:
Landslides essay
Essay
Critical debate
Critique
Current controversies essay
Essay
Project report
Project report
Project report
X
Project report

When this exercise is complete a summary sheet can be prepared using this template:

Assessment method	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Level 6**
Online tests: In class Off campus			
Report / written coursework			
Design / project / portfolio			
Reflection			
Presentations: Group Individual			
Lab portfolio			
Dissertation (& viva)			
Exams			
	Number: Types: New types:	Number: Types New types: Draw on past feedback:	Number: Types: New types: Draw on past feedback:

An example is given overleaf. This is a useful exercise to undertake as it shows the variety and frequency of assessment types.

Assessment method	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Online tests: In class Off campus	5 2	1	
Report / written coursework	1	1	2
Design / project / portfolio			2
Reflection	1	1	
Presentations: Group Individual	1 1		2 1
Lab portfolio		2	
Dissertation (& viva)			1
Exams			4
Essay	1	4	1
Field report	1	3	2
Open book exam		1	
	Number: 13 Types: 8 New types: 8	Number: 13 Types: 7 New types: 2 Draw on past feedback: 5	Number: 15 Types: 8 New types: 3 Draw on past feedback: 3

If there is an imbalance of assessment this can be addressed at the curriculum design stage rather than after validation. **If programme teams wish to go further, the joining up assessment and feedback exercise can be undertaken.** In the feedback column, programme teams can identify for which assessment on which future modules the feedback for this assessment will be of most use. For example, in a level 4 module, the first assessment may be an essay, the second a lab report and the third an open book exam. Therefore any feedback that is specifically about writing an essay may not be much use to the students for assessments 2 and 3. However if the students are required to write an essay in a different module at a later date in level 4 or even in level 5, then the module leader can flag up to the students where and in which module the feedback given will be of most use. This may help with students understanding of when and how to use feedback more effectively. Sharing this kind of mapping and sequencing data with students can help students' understanding of their programme – its integration, cohesion and choice.

Once a programme is up and running, programme teams may decide to evaluate the programme using the TESTA model, (Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment). TESTA is a model analysing students' experience of assessment on a programme. It also explores the wider influence of a programme's assessment design on students' approaches to studying. Whilst student surveys like the NSS will often identify that students experience problems with assessment, they provide little practical information to help programme teams identify and address these issues. The TESTA model provides a finer-grained analysis that may get to the root of issues to inform programme teams of what is working well and to identify areas for development. The TESTA model has been developed out of a major collaborative national research project funded by the Higher Education Academy, and based at the University of Winchester. For details see: http://www.testa.ac.uk

Effective assessment

Making assessment more efficient and (equally/as/more) effective – some suggestions to consider

- Alternative assessment methods which may reduce time spent on assessment e.g. short reports instead of essays, a poster instead of a report. Consider using peer and self-assessment
- Using a summative assessment that builds on earlier work that has not been marked, such as, an examination that uses questions taken from exercises that have been done on a voluntary basis and where general answers have been provided electronically
- Feedback methods – oral taped feedback or podcasting, asking students to self-assess, use of feedback statements, feedback from peers, electronic feedback
- Using personal response systems in classes to provide the opportunity for staff to give immediate feedback on test questions or by asking students to rate samples of previous work
- Consider the assessment strategy across the programme ensuring that students are given practice in assessment activities before being expected to engage in them – e.g. marking exercises and discussion of criteria before asking them to self or peer assess or preliminary work in groups before an assessment of a group exercise
- Designing examination questions that integrate and test knowledge from across the module or programme, so that students are required to integrate learning from multiple lectures.
- Assessment across modules – 'capstone modules' bringing together the experiences and learning across several modules into a project, portfolio or using a case study approach with components from different modules
- Whether performance in a coursework assessment such as in class tasks could provide exemption from a later examination. This would be likely to lead to increased attendance and motivation from students and increased feedback and learning from the class activity
- A flexible assessment system was introduced in a course in the Faculty of Business, Economics and Law, University of Queensland, to address concerns about failure rates, which were felt to be associated with the complexity of the course content and the diversity of the student body. The system adopted consisted of a compulsory final exam (60% at least), an optional mid-semester exam (25%) and five computer-managed learning exercises (15%). Students could choose from various combinations of one or more of the three forms of assessment, and their best score was used in allocating a grade.

Assessment Methods showing both Efficiency and Effectiveness Issues

Assessment Method	Efficiency	Effectiveness
Strategic curriculum review	Avoids over-assessment and repletion; encourages synoptic assessment	Ensures mixture of methods; emphasises student experience; focus on quality of feedback; encourages deep learning
Use of IT	Speeds up marking although takes time to set up; good for	Timely feedback and good quality can be assured

	repeat comments and large classes	
Peer assessment	Reduces lecturer's work; students learn from each other	Deepens understanding by engaging students in marking criteria and outcomes; fosters confidence; encourages dialogue
Self-assessment	Reduces lecturer's work	Deepens self-reflection; leads to lifelong learning; fosters independence
Oral feedback	Good use of class time, no need to write, more informal	Timely feedback, personalised but students need to find it meaningful
In-class assessment	Good use of class time	Timely feedback, good use of class time, eases pressure on summative assessment
Group assessment	Less marking but takes time to address group problems	Develops transferable skills and peer learning

From Journal for Education in the Built Environment, Vol. 5, Issue 2, December 2010 pp. 4-24 (21) ISSN: 1747-4205 (Online) 4 Copyright © 2010 CEBE *Formative Assessment: Balancing Educational Effectiveness and Resource Efficiency* Marilyn Higgins, Fiona Grant & Pauline Thompson: Heriot-Watt University, UK

Checklist

Has the programme team discussed:

- feedback from students and external examiners, advisors, employers, organisations etc where appropriate
- the aims of the programme
- the benchmark statement
- a range of teaching methods across the programme
- a range of assessment methods across the programme
- the changes to the Academic Framework
- LJMU's policies and guidelines
- the programme specification

Further Information / Resources / References

For further information/guidance on:

QAA guidelines

The Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-revised-uk-quality-code May 2018 with full advice and guidance expected from November 2018.

The existing UK Quality Code https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-b-assuring-and-enhancing-academic-quality

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are included in Chapter A1, (Oct 2014) https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards of the Quality Code

Benchmark statements https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements

Want to know more?

What is Constructive Alignment?

Constructive Alignment, a term coined by John Biggs (Biggs, 1999) is one of the most influential ideas in higher education. It is the underpinning concept behind the current requirements for programme specification, declarations of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and assessment criteria, and the use of criterion based assessment. http://www.johnbiggs.com.au/academic/constructive-alignment/

Biggs, J. (2011) *Teaching for quality learning at university* Buckingham, Open University press/Mcgraw Hill 4th edition re-written with Catherine Tang

Bloom's taxonomy and other related areas as summarised by Steve Draper http://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/~steve/best/bloom.html

The Higher Education Academy's curriculum design frameworks and Knowledge HUB webpages https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/institutions/consultancy/frameworks#section-3 and https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hub

The HEA has a wealth of research, resources, toolkits and frameworks by theme, or area of interest in the following areas

- Assessment and feedback
- Employability
- Education for sustainable development
- Flexible learning
- Internationalisation
- Technology Enhanced Learning
- Retention and success
- Reward and recognition
- Student Engagement and Partnership

O'Neill, G., Donnelly, R. and Fitzmaurice, M. (2014) *Supporting programme teams to develop sequencing in higher education curricula* International Journey for Academic Development, Vol 19, Issue 4 www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1360144X.2013.867266

More on assessment

Assessing group work

https://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/groupwork-assessment/
The biggest perceived problem with student groups is often assessment. How do you allocate marks as between product and process? How does the assessor know who did what in the group? How to cope with the passenger or the dominator? This information from the Oxford Brookes Centre for Staff and Learning Development offers some useful perspectives.

Bloxham, Sue (2009) *Marking and moderation in the UK: false assumptions and wasted resources*, Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 34: 2, 209-22

Bloxham, S. and Boyd, P. (2007) *Developing Effective Assessment in Higher Education: a practical guide*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, Open University Press.

Other resources are available here: https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/transforming-assessment-and-feedback/group-work and
https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/740913/Assessing-Group-Work-Australian-Universities-Teaching-Committee.pdf

LJMU also has access to the WebPA system which organises anonymous group peer feedback. More information about this tool is available here: http://webpaproject.lboro.ac.uk

Higher Education Academy resources

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams-research/themes/assessment-and-feedback
Link to the Higher Education Academy's resources on assessment, including
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/marked-improvement *A Marked Improvement* which provides a strong rationale for transforming assessment in higher education. It includes an assessment review tool, offering a practical method to take stock of current practice and promotes a targeted approach to strategic change.

Programme assessment strategies, (PASS)

Programme Assessment Strategies http://www.pass.brad.ac.uk/ Ideas and resources from a HEA funded project, 2009-2012, on how to design an effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable assessment strategy which delivers the key course/programme outcomes.

Rust, C. *The impact of assessment on student learning: How can the research literature practically help to inform the development of departmental assessment strategies and learner centred assessment practices?* Active Learning in Education 2003, vol 3
http://alh.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/3/2/145

Sadler, D.R. (2005) Interpretations of criteria-based assessment and grading in higher education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. 30 (2) April 2005, pp175-94. Available from:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0260293042000264262

Sambell, K., McDowell, L. and Montgomery, C. (2012) Assessment for Learning in Higher Education. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Using personal response systems

LJMU provides access to, and support for staff using, the MeeToo system:
https://ltech.ljmu.ac.uk/index.php/staff-help/collaboration-communication-tools-staff/meetoo

http://www.cwsei.ubc.ca/resources/clickers.htm
A set of clear resources on how to use personal response systems effectively from a project run by the University of Colorado Science Education Initiative (CU-SEI) and the University of British Columbia Science Education Initiative (CWSEI)

Hear how a lecturer in English used a similar system in their teaching:
https://www.chronicle.com/article/Playing-With-Technology/242031

A well designed curriculum takes account of national and LJMU requirements

A programme does not exist in isolation and teams need to work within national and LJMU frameworks when designing or amending programmes.

National requirements

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet. The Quality Code is subject to ongoing development and has recently been revised in May 2018.

The ***revised*** Quality Code: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-revised-uk-quality-code
As part of the transition to the revised Code, advice and guidance associated with the expectations of the Code is being developed but is not yet available (expected from November 2018).

The ***existing*** code has 3 parts, as follows:
Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards. This Chapter contains The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) (November 2014) and subject benchmark statements.

These qualification descriptors give a statement of outcomes that a student should be able to demonstrate for the award of an honours degree, foundation degree, masters degree, doctoral degree and for a certificate of higher education. The descriptors also include a statement of the wider abilities that a typical student could be expected to have developed. It is important to check these descriptors, especially for Masters programmes, where conversion programmes/modules would not be regarded as level 7.
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards

Part B, Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-b-assuring-and-enhancing-academic-quality comprising 11 chapters, as follows:
Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval
Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission

Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching
Chapter B4: Enabling student development and achievement
Chapter B5: Student Engagement
Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning
Chapter B7: External Examining
Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review
Chapter B9: Academic appeals and student complaints
Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education provision with others
Chapter B11: Research Degrees

Along with the chapters there are additional resources https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-b-assuring-and-enhancing-academic-quality/part-b-additional-resources that provide further advice and guidance on a range of topics including:

- enterprise and entrepreneurship;
- addressing contract cheating and the use of essay mills;
- education for sustainable development
- student workload
- contact hours

Part C consists of a single Chapter, Information about Higher Education Provision
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-c-information-about-higher-education-provision

Want to know more about national developments?

LJMU's **Innovations in Practice e-journal** provides a review of recent sector reports in each edition. For the latest edition go to: http://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/iip/index

Department for Education
The Department for Education is the government department with responsibility for children's services and education, including higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England: https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/higher-education-participation

The Higher Education Commission

The Higher Education Commission is an independent body made up of leaders from the education sector, the business community and the three major political parties. Various reports and research papers are available. http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/hec/home

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

HEFCE distributed public money for higher education to universities and colleges in England, and ensures that this money is used to deliver the greatest benefit to students and the wider public. The website contains links to various reports, publications, data and statistics.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/ **HEFCE's responsibilities have now been subsumed by the Office for Students.**

Higher Education Policy Institute

The UK's only independent think tank devoted to higher education. The site has access to many interesting reports and discussions about UK Higher Education. http://www.hepi.ac.uk/

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

HESA collects, processes and publishes data about UK higher education**. https://www.hesa.ac.uk/**

JISC
A membership organisation providing advice on digital technologies and other technical services to universities and colleges **https://www.jisc.ac.uk/**

Office for Fair Access (OFFA)
OFFA was the independent public body that regulated fair access to higher education in England. In particular, they promoted and safeguarded fair access to higher education for people from lower income backgrounds and other under-represented groups. **https://www.offa.org.uk/ OFFA's responsibilities have now been subsumed by the Office for Students.**

Office for Students (OfS)
OfS is an independent public body established by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, and replaces HEFCE and the Office for Fair Access.
https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/

Universities UK

A representative body for Universities http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk

WONKHE
WONKHE provides a platform for anyone interested in higher education policy to engage in debate, commentary and analysis: www.wonkhe.com

Principle 2 – That the curriculum is inclusive and accessible/student centred

What does inclusive, accessible and student centred mean?

How can the curriculum be appropriate to all students, whatever their background, experience and pattern of study? Is accessibility just about physical access or does it mean something else as well? Do we need a variety of methods of delivery? Is the programme aimed at a particular group of learners, e.g. professionals updating their skills? How does the team know what delivery methods are used? Has the team discussed a team approach to delivery? What is the role of the programme team in supporting students vis a vis the role of Student Advice and Wellbeing?

When discussing these questions there are certain minimum requirements that need to be borne in mind.

It is against the law to discriminate against a student or applicant who identifies that they have at least one of the nine protected characteristics detailed within the Equality Act (2010). The nine protected characteristics are: age; race; disability; gender; sexual orientation; religion or belief; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; and gender reassignment.

The purpose of the 2010 legislation was to promote equality of opportunities so that all people can have full opportunities and choices including access to learning. Academic standards should not be in any way compromised.

General principles of inclusive curriculum design are that the design should be

- Equitable
- Transparent
- Anticipatory
- Flexible
- Accountable
- Collaborative

The programme team's awareness and assumptions about their students may adversely affect some groups of students or applicants. Assumptions about prior knowledge, decisions on marketing and publicity about the programme, timetabling, the use or non-use of technology, staff knowledge of cultural differences, the variety, or lack thereof, of delivery and assessment techniques across modules, the choice and use of field trips/excursions/practicals all affect students differently. Is it possible that the team's assumptions and decisions are excluding, or disadvantaging, particular groups of students? Using a variety of teaching and assessment methods, where appropriate to the learning outcomes, will help students with different approaches to learning. Can alternative arrangements be made available to those students who, for example, are unable to access parts of the programme such as field trips? Could the team offer alternatives to all students? What are the practicalities of such an approach? Adjusting the methods of learning, teaching and assessment to meet the needs of a wide range of students may benefit all students and may possibly improve student performance.

Despite widening participation efforts nationally certain social and ethnic groups are still under-represented in universities and the attainment of certain groups is below the achievement of comparable groups of students. For help with this complex area contact the University's Equality and Diversity Manager https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/equality-and-diversity or https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/EOU/90617.htm

"Students classifying themselves as White consistently achieve higher degree outcomes than students recording other ethnicities. This confirms findings from previous HEFCE studies. In all, 72 per cent of White students who entered higher education with BBB gained a first or upper second. This compares with 56 per cent for Asian students, and 53 per cent for Black students, entering with the same A-level grades." From *Differences in degree outcomes* HEFCE report, 2014. http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201403

International students and internationalising the curriculum

Many programmes at LJMU have significant numbers of students who have come to study from overseas. Providing an inclusive approach to teaching and learning is particularly relevant for these programmes. However, being explicit about the academic processes that the programme employs will benefit all students not just international ones. Most students would welcome information

about what is 'good' work, how work is assessed, what the rules are for behaving in lectures, seminars, practicals etc. Consider the diversity of students on the programme and be aware of social and cultural differences that may affect a student's view of assessment and teaching methods. Make sure all students know about assessment, teaching methods and what is expected from each method, the nature of study that is required outside of class and the nature of relationships with staff. Similarly, using straightforward language, avoiding jokes and jargon and allowing students to discuss ideas with friends, in their own language if they wish, before any discussion or presentation to a larger audience, will help many students. Provide activities that enable students to get to know each other and model inclusive behaviour by setting rules such as making sure everyone talks in turn, without interruption. Consider the use of exercises and discussion in the early stages of programmes, or in induction, about inclusivity and diversity as a way of raising awareness with students. This may also offer an opportunity for students to raise any concerns or issues. Consider the cohesion of the cohort and the opportunities for home students to broaden their global awareness. There may be orientation events for international students but little preparation for home students who are asked to work with students from different cultures.

In terms of curriculum design, as opposed to delivery, it is useful to consider whether the curriculum is heavily Western or Eurocentric. Are different viewpoints and perspectives studied? By developing an awareness of other cultures, values and beliefs, students and staff may be better able to live and work in a global community. Programme teams could consider different perspectives and challenge their own assumptions in order to develop an awareness and critical appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives. Consider providing students with multiple ways of acquiring knowledge; multiple ways of demonstrating knowledge and skills and multiple ways of engaging them. Consider requiring students to engage in issues from a variety of perspectives taken from other cultures. An inclusive approach that treats students as individuals, whilst also developing a cohort identity, is likely to help all students succeed. Use culturally diverse examples, materials and case studies. Consider whether the material and examples used in assessment (e.g. case studies, exam questions) are clear to a diverse range of students and free from stereotypes. Be aware that certain contexts of case studies or assignments could cause difficulties for some students, e.g. an assignment that asks students to observe behaviour in nightclubs may be difficult for students who have religious or ethical objections to alcohol. Unless the module is dealing specifically with nightclubs an alternative setting could be used.

It is important that case studies and teaching materials do not use stereotypes of different cultures or that individual students from overseas are not expected to be representative of their country or ethnicity in the same way that staff would not expect a white English student to represent, or speak on behalf of ***all*** white English people.

Check that the wording for tests and examinations is clear and unambiguous. Avoid complex sentence structures, double negatives or embedded questions. If specific cultural knowledge is essential, such as knowledge of the UK electoral system or UK law, state this explicitly and provide advice on how knowledge gaps for any student can be filled.

The programme team should be able to demonstrate that it has considered the effects of international students and other diverse student groups on the curriculum, its delivery and on the identity of the cohort. How are the students supported in the programme? How does the design of the curriculum increase students' confidence in their ability to learn and to succeed? What can we do at the very start of the programme to help form friendship groups and to develop a cohort and programme identity – factors which are likely to contribute to student success. What opportunities are there for students to plan their learning and what support does the programme provide? All the evidence suggests that the most effective support is that provided within the programme. Drop in

centres and other support services have important roles to play but student support within and/or directed from the programme is fundamental to student achievement and the success of the programme.

Questions that could be used in discussion with the programme team:

- Has the programme team considered the programme's / School's recruitment and progression statistics by gender and ethnicity? Are certain groups under-represented, do certain groups do less well? How are any imbalances addressed?
- Does the curriculum, scholarship, research involve previously under-represented groups?
- Are there opportunities to present diverse viewpoints and different approaches in the curriculum?
- How does the programme seek to incorporate the knowledge and understanding brought to it by students from diverse cultures?
- Do/(how do) assignments take account of the diverse background and cultures of students?
- Are there opportunities for perspectives, other than the traditional, to be studied?
- Is there any evidence that the School/subject area staff have sought the views of disabled students or Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups, or of the 'minority' gender where there is an imbalance?
- What does the programme team do to encourage students to be 'inclusive'? (e.g. diversity workshops at induction, group working where groups are assigned randomly)
- Is there a range of assessment methods across the programme?
- Is there a range of teaching methods across the programme?
- Discuss the possibility of students choosing an assessment method/assessment topic
- Do the admissions criteria present any unnecessary barriers e.g. a requirement to be physically fit/mobile in a sports programme when a disabled sportsperson could be included
- Do staff know the procedures if a student declares a disability to them? Are staff aware of their responsibilities?
- Can staff give an example of any adjustments made to the curriculum or to teaching practice in response to either the equality duty or to inclusivity?
- How are students advised about disclosing a disability and the Disabled Students' Allowance?
- Do staff, and students, think the disclosure procedures work?
- Do programme documents make reference to alternative approaches/arrangements? To materials being available in other formats?
- Do staff and students know who their disability co-ordinator is? What do they think the role of that person is?
- What has the programme team considered in order to remove any barriers to participation in the full curriculum including field trips, work placements, and use of specialised equipment by particular groups of students?
- What staff training has taken place on equality and inclusivity?

- Have you considered how technology could be used to support students, lecture recording, for example?

Checklist

Has the programme team discussed

- the implications of the likely background, qualifications and experience of its students
- an inclusive approach to curriculum design and delivery
- a learner support policy
- the administrative arrangements required to provide practical support
- the single Equality Act

Further Information / Resources / References

Further information/guidance

Disability Coordinators Network e-mail LDU-DISCO@ljmu.ac.uk
Equality and Diversity Manager e-mail m.m.akinsanya@ljmu.ac.uk
Student Advice and Wellbeing Services: https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/discover/student-support
International Student Support email internationaladvice@ljmu.ac.uk

Want to know more?

Caruana, V. (2013) Developing a sustainable model for fostering intercultural understanding and building cross-cultural capability through learning in multicultural communities, York/London: HE Academy/UKCISA available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resources/detail/internationalisation/Connections-Report-LeedsMet-Caruana

Caruana, V., Clegg, S., Ploner, J., Stevenson, J. and Wood, R. (2011) Promoting students' resilient thinking in diverse HE learning environments, York: HE Academy report and case studies available at: Project Report: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/promoting-students-resilient-thinking-diverse-higher-education-learning-environments Case Studies: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/promoting-students-resilient-thinking-diverse-higher-education-learning-environments-1

Caruana, V. and Ploner, J. (2010) Internationalisation and Equality and Diversity in HE: merging identities, London: ECU available at: http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/internationalisation-and-equality-and-diversity-in-he-merging-identities

Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com
The Commission provides guidance on its website for Higher Education institutions with respect to fulfilling the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and the Positive Equality Duty and all other aspects of equality. See its website for the Codes of Practice.

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/education-providers/higher-education-providers-guidance

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU)

The ECU works to further support and develop equality and diversity for staff and students in UK higher education institutions.

Berry, J, Loke, G 2011, *Improving the degree attainment of black and minority ethnic students,* ECU and HEA, London, viewed 19 May 2015.
http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/improving-attainment-of-bme-students/ (2011) a joint HEA and ECU. This report looks at the outcomes of the cohort of English-domiciled A-level students who entered full-time degree courses in 2007-08. It examined the extent to which a student's background affected their chance of obtaining an upper second or first class degree. The report updates and extends previous HEFCE research which analysed the cohort of 1997-98 entrants.

Geography Discipline Network: Inclusive Curriculum Project

http://www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/icp
The GDN has published nine guides for staff supporting disabled students, including a guide for disabled students. Although targeted at geography, earth and environmental sciences subject areas, the guides are all generically useful.

Higher Education Academy Resources

Developing an inclusive culture in higher education: final report Wray, M. (2013)
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/inclusive_culture_report_0.pdf [Accessed 6th March 2018]

Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum: discipline-specific guides (2015)
These discipline-specific practitioner guides aim to support staff in creating learning and teaching experiences and environments that enable all students to reach their potential, to feel included in their learning and to become diversity competent.
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/embedding-equality-and-diversity-curriculum-discipline-specific-guides

The Higher Education Academy's framework for internationalising the curriculum (2014)
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/framework-internationalising-higher-education

Inclusive curriculum design in higher education: considerations for effective practice across and within subject areas (2011)
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/inclusive-curriculum-design-higher-education The guide provides further links to subject specific examples.

Scudamore, R. (2013) Engaging home and international students: A guide for new lecturers, York, H.E. Academy. The guide contains clear and useful information for teaching staff.
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/engaging-home-and-international-students-guide-new-lecturers

Outcomes from the What Works? Student Retention and Success project, that ran from 2008 with a final report published in 2017, provide a breadth of approaches to supporting all students to progress and achieve.
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/strategic-priorities/retention/what-works

National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
http://www.skill.org.uk
For general information about good practice for disabled students telephone 0800 328 5050, textphone 0800 068 2422, email info@skill.org.uk

Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group
This is a sector-led group, chaired by Professor Geoff Layer. Their guide, published in January 2017, Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence is available:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-teaching-and-learning-in-higher-education

Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programmes of Study (SCIPS)

http://www.scips.worc.ac.uk/ A web based resource that provides Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programmes of Study

Teachability: Creating an accessible curriculum for students with disabilities

www.teachability.strath.ac.uk

UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)

https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/ The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) is the UK's national advisory body serving the interests of international students and those who work with them. UKCISA provides information, support and guidance for both students and staff.

University of Sheffield

Toolkit on internationalising the curriculum
http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/toolkit/curriculum/international

Oxford Brookes University
Internationalising the Curriculum Resources
https://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/cci/resourcekit.html

Principle 3 – That the curriculum fosters a deep approach to learning, encouraging independence in learning

Most programmes aim to create independent learners and should therefore be able to demonstrate a progression from basic study skills through to critical analysis, reflection and problem-solving, but does the programme try to influence the students' approach to learning?

A student's approach to study can be significantly influenced by the kind of lectures, tasks and assessments that staff design – learners take their cues from the culture and environment in which they learn. Effective learning environments that encourage more than surface learning can improve the likelihood that any group of students will become self-motivating and successful. Staff who are

able to demonstrate their own enthusiasm for their subject are good motivators (Breen & Lindsay, 1999; see Principle 4 in this guide).

Research over recent decades (Marton and Säljö, 1979; Tait and Entwistle, 1996; Bandura 1997; Dweck, 1999) has highlighted the different ways that students in higher education approach their learning. In general, the key approaches are:

- Deep approaches, where the learner is driven by intrinsic curiosity and motivated by a desire to learn, engage meaningfully and master the subject.
- Strategic approaches, where the learner's focus is on achieving good grades. These students focus attention on assessment criteria and will adopt either deep or surface approaches, or choose modules, depending on which will make them more likely to achieve good grades.
- Surface (or shallow) approaches, where the intention is to achieve a pass, usually by the shortest or easiest route possible. Many of these students put insufficient effort into their workload or genuinely misunderstand requirements, thinking it is acceptable simply to recall information.

The reasons students adopt different approaches are multiple and complex, and include personal goals and motivations, prior experiences but also, significantly, the learning environment. Further research (Lieberman and Remedios, 2007) has shown that the learning environment can cause students to change their academic goals through their degree with a shift away from intrinsic interest towards an assessment orientation.

Students will be encouraged to adopt surface approaches to learning where workload pressures are high, so information on assignments given out late, bunching of assessment deadlines or a tightly packed curriculum will not help. Within the programme team discuss what would be a reasonable workload for a student. Is the workload equitable across the modules? Be realistic but bear in mind that, whilst students are expecting to study outside of class, are they aware of roughly how much time and effort they should be putting into their studies?

Information, advice and guidance needs to be managed effectively. Good feedback is essential in helping students understand what is required of them; all programmes should have a feedback strategy. It is worth considering how formative feedback can be planned in to the curriculum, e.g. using peer or group work as feedback, or personal response clickers, or involving students in a discussion of assessment criteria. For further information on feedback see Appendix B, as well as Appendix C for principles of feedback on draft work.

"Ultimately, the main aim of assessment is to develop students' skills to self-assess how they are acquiring subject knowledge and skills and applying them. Self-assessment is not happening often enough and needs to be built into programmes from the first year of study, leading to good scholarship skills as well as life-long learning." From M. Higgins, F. Grant & P. Thompson: Formative Assessment: Balancing Educational Effectiveness and Resource Efficiency Journal for Education in the Built Environment, Vol. 5, Issue 2, December 2010

In general, people work better if they feel they are in control of their situation. Being involved in self or peer assessment can help students take control of their learning so that they will believe that appropriate strategies and task-focused efforts will produce better results. Is the balance correct between taught content and opportunity for choice or independent learning? Are initiative, persistence, reading and effort encouraged or sufficiently rewarded? Enquiry-led activities can help students see the value of initiative and persistence. Devising assessments which help students make

connections between the subject and 'real world' work or the profession can help develop a deeper approach to learning. Students who see staff working with passion and enthusiasm for the subject may be encouraged to study in depth themselves.

Engaging students

LJMU's Teaching and Learning strategy emphasises the importance of engaging students in learning and of developing engagement through partnership.

How to engage students in learning – how does curriculum design help?

An agreed common philosophy within the programme team about the programme's aims is a key factor in helping students identify with, and engage in, the programme. Delivery of the programme's aims may be up to individual members of staff but it is better if there is agreement at the curriculum design stage about the purpose of the curriculum, its delivery and whether there is a particular approach to student learning that the team wishes to develop.

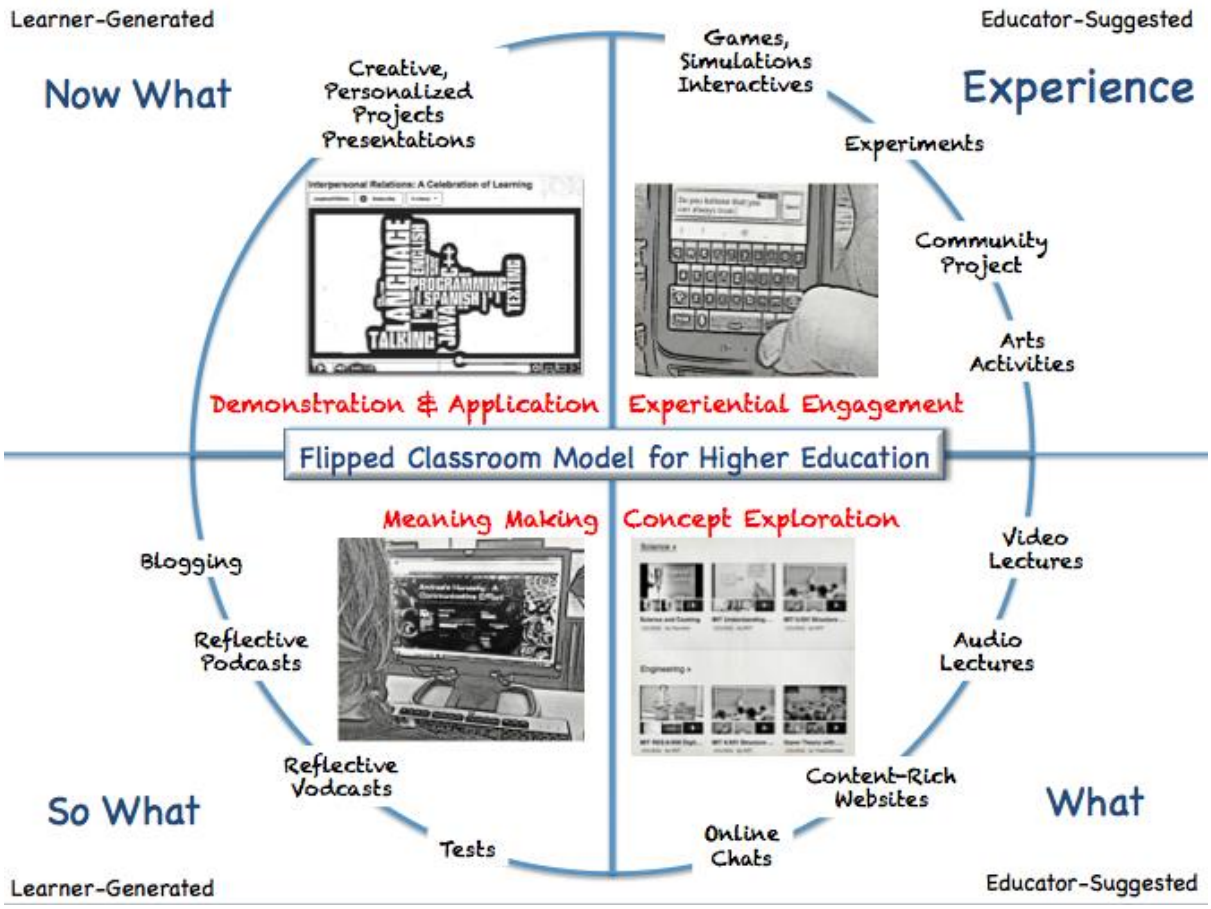
Trowler's (2010) international review of research into student engagement found that engagement in student learning is enhanced by:

- student active participation in their learning (both in-class and out-of-class);
- collaborative activity (e.g. peer-to-peer learning, peer review, assessment);
- student involvement in the design, delivery and assessment of their learning.

There is evidence that students appreciate active learning. In the Student experience research 2012, the most frequent response to the question "What, if anything, would improve the quality of the teaching and learning experience at your university?" – given by 50.2% of the 4,440 who responded – was "more interactive group teaching sessions/tutorials". This compared with 26.1% who answered "more lectures" (NUS and QAA 2012). http://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/research-publications/

Similarly using analysis of large-scale data from the National Survey of Student Engagement in the US, Zhao and Kuh (2004, p. 124) suggest that:
"Participating in learning communities is uniformly and positively linked with student academic performance, engagement in educationally fruitful activities (such as academic integration, active and collaborative learning, and interaction with faculty members), gains associated with college attendance, and overall satisfaction with the college experience."

Therefore, when discussing curriculum design, consideration could be given to how to facilitate and embed collaborative learning activities into contact time. A programme team could consider whether there could be less emphasis on providing content (in class or digitally) and a greater emphasis on staff structuring the learning processes through which students engage with the content, and with each other. Class time could be used to brief, and debrief, extended study out of class supported by learning materials, rather than using scarce class time to present material in the hope that students might then study it out of class. This is a 'flipped classroom' approach as described in Implications of Dimensions of Quality in a market environment (Gibbs, 2012).



The experiential flipped classroom model (source: Gerstein 2012)
http://usergeneratededucation.wordpress.com/2012/05/15/flipped-classroom-the-full-picture-for-higher-education/

Another idea that could be considered is 'the student as producer' principle as developed by the University of Lincoln. In this approach the emphasis is on students producing knowledge in partnership, rather than just consuming knowledge. The focus of student as producer is the undergraduate student, working in collaboration with other students and academics in real research projects, or projects which replicate the process of research in their discipline. (Outcomes from the University of Lincoln's Student as Producer project are available here: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/student-producer-research-engaged-teaching-and-learning-institutional-strategy)

Engaging students before they arrive

Pre induction and induction – setting the standards, high expectations and settling into University

Every student will come with expectations, hopes and anxieties about starting life as a student. Their expectations will be based on their previous experiences and what they have found out about the programme and student life before they arrive. To help minimise misunderstandings and to support a successful transition into HE the programme team could use programme community sites in Canvas to provide clear information about the programme and what is expected.

Programme Community Sites

Programmes can be provided with a programme level community site in Canvas. Such a site would allow all new students to access their programme community site as soon as they have received their confirmed acceptance letter. This provides an opportunity to engage students prior to their arrival. The most immediate benefit of the sites is to provide students with early information about their programme.

Programme sites offer an opportunity to extend support for new students in a variety of ways. For instance by conveying a holistic view of the programme content, structure and philosophy. In addition, the site can show how the curriculum is research-informed, and how assignments map over its duration. Any other programme-wide information that all students would benefit from can also be included.

Successful transition to University goes beyond enrolment and induction. Much evidence in higher education research shows that academic success is attributable to the degree of self-regulation in students' learning. Put simply, those students who take greater control of their learning, who believe academic success is attributable to their effort and ability to self-diagnose learning needs and follow this up with study support, will tend to perform better, develop more durable skills and be more satisfied. Students' belief systems are central to developing self-regulation.

An internal locus of control simply means that the individual believes they are in control of their destiny, and that success is attributable to what they do. Conversely, an external locus of control means that the individual believes external factors – luck, fate, the actions of others – are primarily what determines success, and they will tend towards blaming others for poor performance. Research shows that this belief system is not fixed but can be changed through educational interventions and support for self-directed learning. To assist students in thinking about this, there is a short (13-item) diagnostic questionnaire that students can complete which gives them an indicator of their internal or external belief in control – the Locus of Control Survey: http://www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/LocusofControl-intro.html

Time on task and use of private study time

Students are expected to work outside their contact hours. How is this expectation conveyed? What learning activities do the programme team expect the student to be involved in outside the classroom? It is useful if the programme team can discuss and agree on strategies for student learning, outside contact hours, in order that there is a reasonable agreement on student workload and type of activities across modules. How do module teams encourage students in this learning? Are there activities available via Canvas (quizzes, materials, discussions etc.)? Are students encouraged to work together outside the classroom? What assistance is given to students to promote learning outside timetabled hours?

Students need pointers to effective time management and to the positive effect of practice and further study on learning and assessment. Programme teams should provide guidance on the amount of study time a student is likely to need for out of class activities and for each piece of assessment. Stress that this information is only for guidance but remind students that a 20 credit module is deemed to be 200 hours of learning and the contact hours are only a small fraction of that – we expect them to do a lot beyond attending classes.

What matters in terms of student engagement is the nature of class contact and the amount of studying done outside class contact time; e.g. some coursework assignments mean that students can do less studying/learn less than they would if they were assessed by an examination (Gibbs and

Lucas, 1997) because an exam may encourage students to study more of the syllabus. What is important is how students can be encouraged to spend time studying outside classes. Whilst the number of class contact hours is not an indication of quality it is likely to become a contentious area for debate as students contrast contact with fees.

Programme teams could consider synoptic assessment whereby students are encouraged to make links across modules so that learning from two, or more, modules could be assessed by the same piece of work e.g. theory and practice modules, patchwork text assessment across modules, capstone modules. Each module would have to have at least one piece of assessment. Other ideas for encouraging students to learn outside the classroom include:

- Working with other students on tasks;
- Reading articles, journals, blogs and contributing to discussion boards etc.; encouraging students to comment on each other's work;
- Using teams and tasks so that students are less able to complete the assessment without engaging in some out of class activities/study; possibly introduce a competitive element to encourage participation;
- Develop an activity into a student showcase event – producing a conference, a debate, a display, a production;
- Using real life projects or challenges that have the potential to challenge the students, connect with likely employment and professional activity, providing an opportunity to work together, learning from each other;
- Working with an outside organisation, an employer or local community group in order for students to apply their knowledge and/or to produce a project or product
- Provide an activity for students to do between classes, especially if the classes are scheduled first thing in the morning and then later in the day;
- Use PDP /tutorial activities to discuss time management and out of class study activities.

The Careers Team can help with some of the organisation of some student showcase events, and more importantly, can help provide contacts / employers to attend and speak at relevant activities.

Engaging students in assessment

Students need opportunities to develop their own evaluative strategies in order to judge and improve and their work. The QAA recognises the importance of engaging students in assessment in order to improve student learning. Chapter B6 of the Quality Code, assessment and recognition of prior learning, Indicator 6 reads *Staff and students engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made*. As well as the programme team engaging in conversation about standards and criteria it is useful if students are given opportunities to be actively involved in assessing examples of work and in discussing criteria and feedback.

Keeping students engaged during the long summer break

LJMU's current academic calendar means that many undergraduate students finish formal teaching at around Easter and may not have any further scheduled contact, apart from assessment, until mid-September. Programme teams may wish to consider how to encourage students to use this time to

deepen learning, to gain relevant practical experience and to prepare for study at the next level. Providing activities for students via Canvas; using networking to keep students in touch with the University and each other; and providing updates about the programme or any interesting news items could help students to remain engaged with their studies over the summer. Information about placement opportunities, successful graduates or staff research, any practical information about options, results, prizes, induction, as well as more structured learning activities, could be provided.

From Healey, M., Flint, A. and Harrington, K. (2014) Engagement through partnership: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education HEA York *https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/engagement-through-partnership-students-partners-learning-and-teaching-higher*

Both the number of contact hours and the size of classes are priority areas for students. Yet students recognise that the quality of their experience is not only dependent on provision but also on their own effort and input. That means institutions have a vital responsibility to facilitate and ensure effort, engagement, interaction and active and deep learning. Benchmarking how engaged students are,

rather than simply measuring how satisfied they are, could be helpful to inform the enhancement of institutional teaching and learning policies and practices.

Ioannis Soilemetzidis, Paul Bennett, Alex Buckley, Nick Hillman, Geoff Stoakes (2014) The HEPI/HEA student academic experience survey, HEPI/HEA

In summary curriculum design can encourage a deep approach by:

- aligning learning outcomes, teaching and learning approaches and assessment to assist students to achieve the learning outcomes;
- designing the subject in a way which matches students' prior knowledge and learning skills and helps students to develop further;
- designing assessment which rewards students for demonstrating understanding, making connections, etc.;
- helping students to perceive clear goals and standards for learning;
- encouraging active engagement with learning tasks, e.g. students are engaged in inquiry or creative production, exploring complex issues, real life problems or case studies of practice;
- bringing out the structure of the subject explicitly and encouraging students to make connections with (or challenge) what they already know;
- giving students opportunities to discuss, debate and compare their understanding with each other and with the teaching staff;
- giving students opportunities for formative feedback;
- giving students reasonable opportunities to make reasonable choices about what and how they will learn;
- using student-focused teaching approaches which emphasise changes in student understanding, and help students to become aware of critical differences between their prior understandings about the subject matter and new understandings or ideas which the subject is seeking to develop;
- teaching in ways which encourage students' intrinsic interest - showing your enthusiasm and emphasising how relevant and/or important the subject is; making connections with research, real life projects and concerns and with professional development.

Taken from the University of Technology, Sydney http://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/teaching-and-learning/learning-and-teaching/students-approaches-learning

Questions that could be used in discussion with the programme team:

- Consider how assessment influences a student's approach to learning. Is success encouraged through recall of information for example? Does bunching of assessment deadlines raise workload levels so as to encourage surface learning?
- Does the mode of delivery and assessment of learning encourage students to adopt deep approaches?
- Is the nature of assessment different at level 6 to level 4? Do the assignments prompt complex thinking, such as integrating concepts, applying learning, constructing arguments and hypothesising?

- How are students prepared for the development of learning? Are they prepared for critical thinking? Are there sufficient opportunities in the curriculum to foster initiative and creativity to practise and demonstrate personal-planning and problem-solving skills?
- How does the programme encourage and place value on independent enquiry?
- Does the programme encourage student involvement, for example through enquiry-based work, work placements, student discussion of assessment criteria?
- Is there sufficient emphasis on demonstrating linkages and progression between modules on the programme? How do we encourage students to express these links?
- Have we considered the role of technology in fostering discussion and feedback: e.g. through the wide range of Canvas tools?
- How is formative feedback provided?

Checklist

Has the programme team discussed:

- teaching methods in terms of their ability to develop learning
- assessment in terms of its ability to develop learning
- students' workload and assessment sequencing
- a feedback strategy
- how learning technologies can be embedded to improve learning
- linkages between modules
- opportunities for independent and enquiry-led learning.

Further Information / Resources / References

For further information/guidance on:

Learning development contact The Teaching and Learning Academy
https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/teaching-and-learning-academy

Want to know more

Bandura, A. (1986) *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*, New York, Freeman

Chun-Mei Zhao and Kuh, G. *Adding Value: Learning Communities and Student Engagement* Research in Higher Education, Vol 45, No 2 (March 2004)

Gibbs, G. (2010) *Dimensions of Quality Higher Education Academy*, York
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/dimensions_of_quality.pdf

Gibbs, G. (2012) *Implications of Dimensions of Quality in a market environment*, HEA York
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/implications-dimensions-quality-market-environment

Gibbs, G. *Student engagement the latest buzzword* May 2014 http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/student-engagement-the-latest-buzzword/2012947.article

Gunn, V. and Fisk, A. (2013) *Considering teaching excellence in higher education 2007-2013: a literature review since the CHERI report 2007*. York: Higher Education Academy https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/telr_final_acknowledgements.pdf

Healey, M., Flint, A. and Harrington, K. (2014) *Engagement through partnership: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education* HEA York https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/engagement-through-partnership-students-partners-learning-and-teaching-higher Examples of activities in this publication

Higgins, M. Grant, F. and Thompson, P.*: Formative Assessment: Balancing Educational Effectiveness and Resource Efficiency* Journal for Education in the Built Environment, Vol. 5, Issue 2, December 2010

Higher Education Academy resources home page - https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hub

Higher Education Academy Student Engagement research and resources: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/strategic-priorities/student-engagement#section-4

Kuh, G. D. (2008) *High-impact educational practices: what they are, who has access to them, and why they matter* Washington DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. Brief guide to high-impact practices available here: https://www.aacu.org/resources/high-impact-practices (based on American education system but could be translated to UK context)

Lieberman, D.A. and Remedios, R. (2007) *Do undergraduates' motives for studying change as they progress through their degrees?* British Journal of Educational Psychology, 77, pp 379--396.

Marton, F. and Säljö, R. (1976) *On qualitative differences in learning I: Outcome & Process*, British Journal of Educational Psychology, 46, pp4-11.

Pascarella, E.T. and Terenzini, P.T. (2005*). How college affects students* (Vol 2): A third decade of research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

QAA/NUS Student Experience Research 2012. Part 2: Independent Learning and Contact Hours http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Student-Experience-Research-12-Part-2.pdf

Sadler, D.R. (2005) Interpretations of criteria-based assessment and grading in higher education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. 30 (2) April 2005, pp175-94.

Buckley, A., Hillman, N. and Soilemetzidis, I. (2015) *The HEPI/HEA student academic experience survey*. This survey investigated the learning and teaching experiences of students, including: satisfaction with courses; reasons for dissatisfaction; experience of different-sized classes; total time spent working; perceptions of value-for-money; institutional spending priorities and student wellbeing.
Available http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2015/06/04/2015-academic-experience-survey/

Thomas, L. (2015) *Compendium of effective practice in directed independent learning* York: Higher Education Academy https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/compendium-effective-practice-directed-independent-learning

Trowler, P. and Trowler, V. (2010) *Research and evidence base for student engagement* https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/research-and-evidence-base-student-engagement HEA, York

Trowler, V. (2010) *Student engagement literature review* HEA, York https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/research-and-evidence-base-student-engagement

Principle 4 - The curriculum is based upon/has links to research and scholarship

"*rather than telling students what we know, we should show students how we learn" DiCarlo (2009:260)*

"The relationship between teacher and learner is … completely different in higher education from what it is in schools. At the higher level, the teacher is not there for the sake of the student, both have their justification in the service of scholarship." (von Humboldt 1810/1970, translated by Elton 2001, p. 45 in Healey, Jenkins and Lea, 2014)

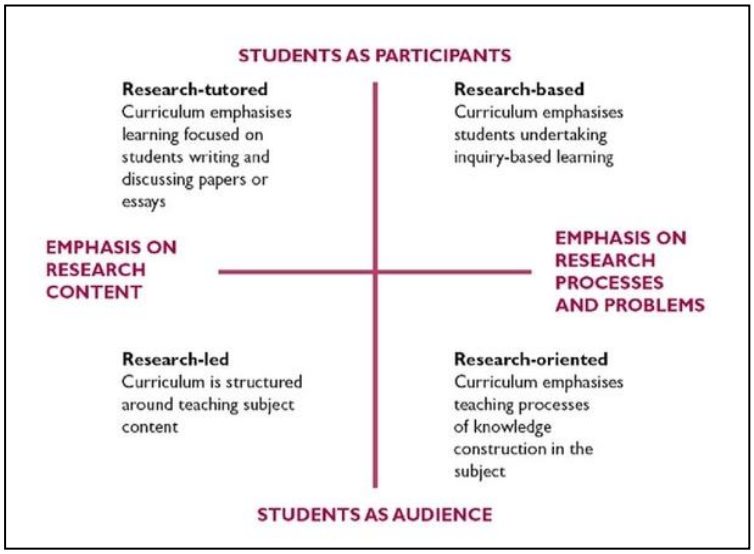
"For the students who are the professionals of the future, developing the ability to investigate problems, make judgments on the basis of sound evidence, take decisions on a rational basis, and understand what they are doing and why is vital. Research and inquiry is not just for those who choose to pursue an academic career. It is central to professional life in the twenty-first century." (Brew 2007, p. 7 in Healey, Jenkins and Lea, 2014)

Many academic staff regard teaching and research/scholarly activity as inseparable yet there is little evidence to suggest that the links between teaching and research are managed or promoted (Jenkins, 2004). However studies of student perceptions show that when staff research is incorporated into teaching, students then perceive their courses as up-to-date and are more likely to regard the staff as enthusiastic about their teaching (Breen and Lindsay, 2002). Nevertheless current knowledge is not seen as an acceptable substitution for poor teaching. Therefore in designing and reviewing the curriculum it may be worth considering how the opportunity can be used to strengthen links between research, teaching and research informed teaching. The curriculum, including the assessment, could be developed in ways that support the research process in the discipline, progressively developing research skills and understanding of knowledge construction processes. The team could consider emphasising the employability aspects of research so that all students can see benefits of a research-based approach. Alternatively, selected students could work with staff on research projects or all students could engage in inquiry-based learning. There is evidence of the effectiveness of this approach in stimulating deep and retained learning. Programme teams would need to discuss and agree approaches and activities across the team so that the students aren't subjected to a series of unco-ordinated research projects, or duplication of learning outcomes across several modules.

Research can interface with the curriculum in various ways through:

- Current and emerging knowledge and theory
- Development of research skills *(project design, data collection, analysis techniques)*

- Development of critical thinking *(knowledge as an evolving process, ethics, interpretation and critical evaluation, argument construction)*



From Healey, 2005.

The main question that needs to be addressed is: 'Where are research skills and understandings presented in the programme? Are they apparent in the programme outcomes, the delivery and assessment?'

Further questions that could be addressed by the programme team to ensure that research and scholarly activity are reflected in the curriculum include:

- Is student exposure to current ideas and the research culture in the subject presumed or managed?
- Is there a strategy to ensure 'cutting edge' developments in the subject are embedded across the programme?
- What's the team's understanding or concept of research based learning?
- How do research skills interface with employability and World of Work skills?
- How does the School disseminate, and programmes use, staff research?
- If there are no/few research active staff how does the programme provide access to research?
- How does the team ensure that the team is up-to-date with research developments?
- Can the team show how they draw upon research, scholarship or professional activity in their teaching?
- What research methods, skills, ethics are taught and practised?
- When should research skills be introduced into the curriculum?
- Is there a clearly identifiable pathway of research skill development through the programme?
- How is plagiarism prevented in research based work?

Questions that could be used in discussion by the programme team regarding student experiences of research:

- How are students made aware of staff / departmental research expertise?
- Does the department host research seminars or guest speakers? Can students participate? How do students engage in them – can they be linked to the curriculum?
- Where are research methods and skills developed throughout the curriculum, for example, data collection, analysis and interpretation, critical thinking and argument construction?
- Do students get sufficient opportunity to experience research-led learning, for example, independent enquiry-led learning (projects / dissertations), working with real research data and potential opportunities to work alongside research staff on live research projects?
- How does students' experience of research contribute to their professional or employability-related development? (e.g. project management, initiative, creative thinking).
- Is good quality student research recognised and rewarded? Are there opportunities to disseminate and raise awareness of student research outputs, for example, project seminars or student research journals?

Checklist

Has the programme team discussed:

- how research/scholarship feeds into this programme
- whether to alter the curriculum in any way in order to encourage the link between teaching and research/scholarship
- staff development needs – technical and support staff as well as teaching staff
- research informed teaching initiatives
- the facilitation of the student experience of research at programme and departmental levels

Further Information / Resources / References

For further information/guidance on

Linking teaching and research/scholarship – contact the Teaching and Learning Academy, https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/teaching-and-learning-academy

Want to know more?

Breen, R. and Lindsay, R. (2002) Different disciplines require different motivation for student success, *Research in Higher Education*, 43 (6), pp693-725.

Council on Undergraduate Research (USA organisation)
The mission of the Council on Undergraduate Research is to support and promote high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship. For a series of international articles on undergraduate research see
http://www.cur.org/resources/institutions/international_perspectives/

DiCarlo, S.E. (2009) The Claude Bernard distinguished lecture: Too much content, not enough thinking, and too little FUN! *Advances in Physiology Education,* 33: 257–264.

Education-line
An open database for education research hosted by Leeds University until 2013. The website provides access to the Education-line database and conference information created and maintained by the BEI office at Leeds University between 1986 and 2013.
http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/index.html

Healey, M. (2005) Linking research and teaching: exploring disciplinary spaces and the role of inquiry-based learning, in Barnett, R. (Ed*) Reshaping the University: new relationships between research, scholarship and teaching*, p 30-42. Maidenhead, McGraw-Hill

Healey, M. Jenkins, A. and Lea J (2014) *Developing research-based curricula in college-based higher education* York, The Higher Education Academy
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-research-based-curricula-college-based-higher-education

Healey, M. Lannin, L. Stibbe, A. and Derounain J (2013) *Developing and enhancing undergraduate final-year projects and dissertations* York, The Higher Education Academy
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/developing-and-enhancing-undergraduate-final-year-projects-and-dissertations

Kandiko, C. and Kinchin, I. (eds) (2013) *Student perspectives on research-rich teaching* HERN-J London, Kings College

Jenkins, A. Healey, M. and Zetter. R. (2007*) Linking teaching and research in disciplines and departments* York, The Higher Education Academy
This guide offers suggestions as to how disciplinary communities and departments can strengthen the good practice that already exists. The guide contains many case studies and department policy and practice suggestions. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/linking-teaching-and-research-disciplines-and-departments

Reinvention:
Reinvention is an online, peer-reviewed journal, dedicated to the publication of high-quality undergraduate student research. The journal welcomes academic articles from all disciplinary areas and all universities. All articles undergo rigorous peer review, based on initial editor screening and refereeing by two or three anonymous referees. Reinvention is published bi-annually and only houses papers written by undergraduate students or papers written collaboratively by undergraduate students and academics.
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/reinvention/

Principle 5 – That the curriculum is based on feedback, evaluation and review

Curriculum development should be based on student feedback and evaluative information. Programme review should be a continuous, active and responsive process that encourages critical reflection, action planning and improvement for both the programme team and the students. The University's Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement (CME) processes provide the programme leader and programme team with an opportunity to reflect, review, and reinvigorate the programme, if needed. The involvement of students, through Boards of Studies and other feedback,

is an important factor in programme evaluation and development. There should also be evidence of continuing development and review, not just as part of the annual monitoring and review process. Programme teams are expected to evaluate the data, provided by the *WebHub*, to explore trends and to discuss whether any changes to teaching, learning and assessment are required.

In planning and reviewing programmes, programme leaders should ensure that programme teams identify their key sources of evaluative information. These include, for example:

- entry statistics
- progression and retention rates
- analysis of career paths of graduates
- external examiner reports
- the National Student Survey or other national surveys
- LJMU student surveys
- other, more local, student feedback, provided in student councils and Boards of Studies or module evaluations
- annual monitoring reports
- benchmark statements
- professional body reports.

In particular, programme teams should be able to detail how such sources of evaluative material are continually monitored, fed into the development of the programme and how this has impacted upon student learning. In examining student evaluations programme teams will want to understand how and why students experience the programme in the way that they do by supplementing statistical data with qualitative surveys, open-ended responses and follow up interviews and focus groups.

Programme teams should be able to provide evidence of evaluation and review of learning and teaching practice. This could take the form of:

- programme team development, for example, through developmental away days
- attendance at teaching and learning conferences
- papers given at teaching and learning conferences
- individual professional development planning to improve teaching and learning processes
- evidence from peer review processes and how this feeds into improving teaching and learning practices in the programme team
- evidence of research or scholarly activity in the area of learning and teaching which impacts on the student experience.
- involvement in programme development through other activities aimed at supporting holistic approaches to curriculum design and development, including Carpe Diem

The programme can encourage the collection of informal feedback as well as using institutional and external feedback. For example, students could be asked to summarise key points of a session,

individually or in groups, orally or on paper, providing instant feedback. Peer review could be another way of obtaining feedback or new ideas about the programme. Staff should be encouraged to be reflective, to monitor their own effectiveness and to share ideas and practice with the programme team. Evaluation should therefore be a continuous, active and responsive process that encourages critical reflection and improvement for both the programme team and the students. There are various institutional data sources that are available to programme teams. The majority of data sets are almost instantly accessible via various online interfaces, while some could be accessed on request. The data are utilised for monitoring or evaluation purposes and could help to identify problematic areas and to support decision making.

Web Hub

Web Hub, the University's business intelligence system, is a comprehensive repository of information that allows staff to view various Institution, Faculty/School, programme and student related information from one source.

Web Hub contains a variety of data related to the programme's 'life cycle' (e.g. UCAS applications, enrolment, progression and graduation), as well as results from national student and graduate surveys, and much more. All data on the Web Hub database, excluding survey data and some benchmarking data which may be provided from external agencies such as IPSOS (NSS results), originates from the institutional student record system, SIS (Student Information System).

There are multiple levels of information that could be accessed via Web Hub: University, Faculty, School, Subject Reporting Group, Programme or Group of Programmes and module. Data can be viewed retrospectively, giving an opportunity to obtain a longitudinal perspective on various programme and module level statistics, student demographics, performance, progression and completion.

Web Hub also allows users to generate bespoke reports by selecting from options/tick boxes or entering search terms. Most reports have an option to view them as Excel spreadsheets, making them suitable for further analysis if needed.

Web Hub can be accessed via the following link
http://aphub.ljmu.ac.uk/Staff/WH2/General/index.asp

Some of the key data sets that can be accessed via Web Hub and elsewhere are listed below.

National Student Survey (NSS) and other student surveys

The NSS is increasingly used as part of the quality assurance framework for higher education. The NSS is distributed to all students in the final year of their course. Mostly this is final year undergraduate students but also includes two year undergraduate courses such as HND programmes. The QAA uses NSS results in supporting their judgments about confidence through institutional audits, examining not only NSS results, but also how institutions use them for quality assurance and enhancement. The quantitative data from statement scores are available on Web Hub and programme teams are encouraged to make use of NSS results, and the actions they have taken in response, as examples of quality enhancement in their self-evaluation documents.

NSS results are available on the Web Hub to inform annual monitoring and programme review. Results can be filtered at various levels, Faculty, Subject Reporting Group and (if a sufficient return

rate) by programme. Scores can be benchmarked against performance at institutional level, against peer institutions, comparable disciplines across the sector, and against national results.

LJMU also participates in the United Kingdom Engagement Survey (UKES) which is the only undergraduate survey in the UK to focus on student engagement. UKES is based on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is widely used in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Ireland. The most recent report (UKES 2017) provides more detail of trends in how students are engaging in different learning activities.

There is also the national Student Academic Experience Survey run by the Higher Education Policy Institute and Higher Education Academy (HEPI-HEA) This survey has been running since 2006 and is now a fixture in the policy landscape. Its focus on what students get, how hard they work, and what they think of their experience makes it even more useful at a time of high fees and difficult budget decisions. Survey reports are available from the HEPI website, with the most recent one from 2017 available here: http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2017/06/07/2017-student-academic-experience-survey/

New analysis of the Student Academic Survey, published in January 2018, focuses on what affects how much students learn: http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2018/01/08/affects-much-students-learn-new-analysis-student-academic-experience-survey-data/

Qualitative Survey data

The University pays special attention to the qualitative data from student surveys as open text comments are a rich source of student feedback with the potential to illuminate scores and to identify issues that fall through the gaps of the survey categories. The qualitative data is available from programme leaders and Faculty Quality Enhancement Officers.

For various approaches to analysis of open text survey responses and triangulation of NSS and other survey qualitative data with other institutional data sets, contact Elena Zaitseva, Teaching and Learning Academy (e.zaitseva@ljmu.ac.uk, ext 8672).

Postgraduate Surveys

Two surveys for postgraduate students, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), both distributed on behalf of the Higher Education Academy, measure the quality of postgraduate research provision. For results and further information about the PTES at LJMU, please contact Elena Zaitseva, Teaching and Learning Academy e.zaitseva@ljmu.a.c.uk . Annual PTES reports with aggregated results from all participating institutions are available via the HEA website: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/institutions/surveys/postgraduate-taught-experience-survey#section-4

Destinations of Leavers statistics

The Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) is an annual survey conducted by the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The Destination data provide information on the activities of students six months after leaving a Higher Education institution. It includes the type of work a graduate has entered or what sort of further study they may be engaged in, the name of employer and the graduate's income. Web Hub provides access to 2008/2009 data onwards. Staff can access LJMU employment rates in a graph format at Faculty, School and individual programme

level. The DLHE benchmarking tool allows a comparison of LJMU results with other institutions, both sector wide and against the peer group. A self-reporting facility is also available.

Note that the DLHE survey is being replaced by Graduate Outcomes - a new methodology for collecting data on graduate destinations. December 2018 will be the first collection point for this new approach.

Canvas usage statistics

By using Canvas analytics it is possible to gain a valuable indication of how students access and use the learning resources provided via the VLE. For further information and guidance on Canvas analytics, and how they might be used, please contact the Learning Technologists in the Teaching and Learning Academy: ltsupport@ljmu.ac.uk

Other national data sources

The **Higher Education Statistics Agency** offers a wealth of statistical information about UK higher education. http://www.hesa.ac.uk/

The **Office for Students** website houses a range of data and analysis on students and their participation in and experience of Higher Education: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/

For further information about these surveys please contact Elena Zaitseva, Teaching and Learning Academy, ext 8672, e mail e.zaitseva@ljmu.ac.uk

Checklist

Has the programme team:

- indicated a continuing strategy for using feedback in the evaluation and review of the programme?
- identified key sources of feedback information?
- responded to student feedback ?
- shown evidence of evaluation and review of such information leading to development of teaching and learning practices?
- designed into the programme opportunities for feedback and evaluation?
- shown engagement of the programme team in School/Faculty, LJMU and external teaching and learning development opportunities?
- evaluated key statistical data?

Further Information / Resources / References

For further information/guidance on

Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement - https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-quality

Programme Validation and Review information - https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-quality

Student Surveys – Elena Zaitseva, Teaching and Learning Academy, ext 8672, e mail e.zaitseva@ljmu.ac.uk

Carpe Diem – Jim Turner, Teaching and Learning Academy, ext 8764 e mail j.c.turner@ljmu.ac.uk

Want to know more

Armellini, A. and Jones, S. (2008) *Carpe Diem: seizing each day to foster change in e-learning desig*n Reflecting education Vol 4, No 1
http://www.reflectingeducation.net/index.php/reflecting/article/view/52

Bennett, P. Turner, G. (2013) *Postgraduate Research Experience Survey*, 2013 York HEA
Available from the Higher Education Academy website https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams-research/research-and-policy/published-research

Bradley, M. (2017) *Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey* (PTES): *Understanding the experiences and motivations of taught postgraduate students* 2017 York HEA
This and earlier PTES reports are available from:
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/institutions/surveys/postgraduate-taught-experience-survey#section-4

Buckley, A. (2013) *Engagement for Enhancement York HE Academy* This research explores the applicability and usefulness of student engagement surveys and reports the findings from a UK pilot of selected questions from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) gathered from nine institutions in Spring/Summer 2013.
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/engagement_for_enhancement_final_0.pdf

Darwin, S. (2010*). Exploring critical conceptions of student-led evaluation in Australian higher education*. In M. Devlin, J. Nagy and A. Lichtenberg (Eds.) Research and Development in Higher Education: Reshaping Higher Education, 33 (pp. 203–212). Melbourne

National Student Survey: Information available from
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/nss/ (no longer updated)
https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/

Buckley, A., Hillman, N. and Soilemetzidis, I. (2015) *The HEPI/HEA student academic experience survey*. This annual survey investigated the learning and teaching experiences of students, including: satisfaction with courses; reasons for dissatisfaction; experience of different-sized classes; total time spent working; perceptions of value-for-money; institutional spending priorities and student wellbeing.
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/StudentAcademicExperienceSurvey2015.pdf or from the HEPI website: http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2015/06/04/2015-academic-experience-survey/

Neves, J. and Hillman, N. (2017) *Student Academic Experience Survey* HEPI/HEA
This year's survey had additional questions on how much students feel they have learned and also included respondents from alternative providers.

http://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-Student-Academic-Experience-Survey-Final-Report.pdf

A well-designed curriculum takes account of intake, outputs and the market

Inputs and the market

Identifying the characteristics of prospective learners is a fundamental first stage in programme design. Programme teams need to be aware of the characteristics of their likely students and of the students they would like to attract. How is the curriculum designed to attract and engage such students? A good starting point is to check the background of existing students/prospective students:

- entry qualifications and other entry statistics
- previous education – FE college, access, state school, overseas
- first time into HE?
- gender balance
- inclusivity of students and applicants
- employed?
- living at home?
- Balance of home and international applicants and students

Are current students and those on the new/revised programme likely to:

- have realistic expectations of HE in general and of this course in particular?
- know what career they are aiming for?
- expect to study particular topics or subject areas?
- be working?
- be unfamiliar with particular aspects of the programme/not familiar with expected pre requisite knowledge?
- expect to be provided with specialist equipment, software or other resources?

A business case has to be made which provides justification for a new programme. Therefore programme teams should involve employers and marketing in discussions as well as checking what competitor institutions are doing. The business case should cover market analysis, planning projections and include a risk analysis and costs of resource requirements. Particular attention must be paid to the requirements for student support resources, including any needs for specialist equipment, site licences for computer software and for off campus support. Can the programme demonstrate both a healthy recruitment of suitable applicants and evidence of employment opportunities for graduates on completion of the course? Are competitor institutions offering or planning similar programmes?

All new programme proposals must receive planning approval within the Faculty from the Director of School/Centre and the Dean of Faculty and then from the Academic Planning Panel (APP). Programme teams must be able to demonstrate that there is a market for the proposal, that

resources are available and that risks can be managed. For further advice about programme approval contact the Quality Enhancement Officers and the Faculty Registrars.

Outputs

Similarly the team needs to be aware of the career destinations of its students and, preferably, to know long term as well as short term information. Does the information correlate to what the team thinks it is providing? Can the team anticipate what effect the changes they are making are going to have on graduate destinations? Graduate destinations are a key programme indicator used by the Government and by potential applicants. Using alumni to inform curriculum development may provide useful insights for staff.

Undergraduate programmes at LJMU have an emphasis on employability and work related learning as core characteristics of the programmes. Key aims of the University's Strategic Plan 2017-22 are that we are a university that "embeds the knowledge, skills and experience valued by employers" and that we provide "dynamic opportunities for work-related learning, overseas exchanges, community engagement and student enterprise". If the programme is not related to a specific professional area the team should be able to demonstrate that it still develops generic graduate skills and 'employability'. It is a LJMU requirement that undergraduate programmes of 240 credits or more must provide some kind of work-related learning. Links to professional activity and 'real world' tasks can raise aspirations and increase motivation as students can see clearly the relevance of the activity. Such work may help reduce graduate under-employment. Linking such work to personal and professional development may help students to identify their own strengths, weaknesses and values. It is a requirement that students on undergraduate programmes of 240 credits or more are required to complete the online CareerSmart: Explore resource which helps students develop self awareness related to their skills. Programme teams could consider how to encourage and facilitate students' engagement with the full suite of CareerSmart resources. How might the curriculum and Personal Development Planning opportunities support students in identifying and further developing their knowledge, skills and attributes related to futire career-related aspirations?. Could a tutorial or skills module be developed or an integrated project, case study or work placement? What opportunities are there for students to gain work-related experience? Are projects based on real life scenarios; can employers be invited to develop and assess case studies and presentations, to provide short placements etc? Are there opportunities to learn from work outside the University, beyond a work placement?

Work-related learning is an umbrella term that describes, within the HE setting, a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities that enable students to learn at, through, or for work. It values experience of a workplace setting, as well as the development of skills, knowledge and attributes that are of importance and will help students to succeed in the world of work and their wider lives.

Work-related learning encompasses traditional forms of work-based learning, often undertaken in the form of year long sandwich or shorter placements, but also includes a broader spectrum of teaching and learning approaches within the curriculum that could support a student's academic, personal and career development. Such approaches may include work-derived projects, simulations and case studies.

The particular model of work-related learning adopted by LJMU is one that is aimed at maximising the opportunities that programmes provide for students to learn about themselves and to have experience of the world of work. This model involves students in four inter-related aspects:

- Learning about themselves: self awareness of strengths and areas for development, personal values and interests, future aims including career aspirations;
- Learning and practising skills and knowledge of value in the world of work: subject-specific knowledge and skills as well as broader work-related skills i.e. Graduate Skills and WoW Skills;
- Experiencing the world of work: work-based learning placements, work-derived projects and activities;
- Experiencing and learning how to learn and manage oneself in a range of situations.

(Model adapted from Moreland N. *Work-related Learning in higher education* (2005) Learning and Employability Series Two, H.E. Academy)

These four inter-related aspects could be developed within a single work-related learning module. They could also underpin the design of a whole curriculum model for supporting students' personal, academic and career development.

Experience of the world of work may take different forms but its benefits are numerous to all involved; it has the potential to:

- support students in further developing subject-related knowledge and skills and gain understanding of the relationship between theory and its application in practice;
- support students in recognising their own strengths, preferences and areas for development in terms of future employment;
- enable students to make more informed career choices;
- support students in developing particular work-related skills, knowledge and attributes;
- create and sustain relationships between the programme team and external organisations;
- introduce new knowledge and ideas into the workplace;
- lead directly to graduate employment for the student;
- lead to further opportunities for the institution and external organisations to work and learn together.

Work-based learning placements provide an ideal means by which to satisfy programme requirements for work-related learning and to support students in their successful entry to and progression in future careers.

In this case work-based learning refers principally to the placement of students in a workplace environment as a planned and integrated part of their programme of study. The purpose of which is to support students, via appropriate learning outcomes and assessment, in developing and applying particular skills, knowledge and other attributes relevant to their programme of study and/or future employment.

Whilst it may be desirable for all students to undertake a work-based placement with an external organisation as part of their programme this may not always be possible or desirable. Occupations that are typically undertaken through freelance/self-employment may not be suitable for offering work-based learning placements. Providing students with other opportunities to engage with workplace issues and experience real world learning is, however, still possible and could be enhanced further by the involvement of employers in their design and/or delivery. Other models, involving mainly campus-based activities include:

- a work-derived project involving direct contact with an employer/other external stakeholders, but without the need for placement. Further benefit may be derived by students working together in groups to address the demands of the project;
- a well developed simulation of the workplace/workplace activity, ideally supplemented by employer involvement either in providing feedback on the outputs of the simulation or in the initial design of the simulated activity;
- employer/occupationally driven case studies which may be enhanced by students having to present their findings to an external panel containing employer/occupational representatives;
- off campus learning, such as field/site visits, with learning outcomes that are clearly related to the work setting.
- opportunities for students to engage in enterprise activities (for further details of what might be possible here please contact the Centre for Entrepreneurship)

Further guidance on the provision of work placements and other forms of work-based learning is available from LJMU's Placement Learning Code of Practice, available from LJMU's Policy Centre

Checklist

Has the programme team discussed:

- how to demonstrate a need for the programme
- completing a business case
- publicity with Marketing and Corporate Communications
- the likely characteristics of the target intake
- the integration of employability and work-related learning
- the QAA Code of Practice on work based and placement learning, where relevant
- professional body accreditation and its requirements.
- the programme's plans with employers, alumni and students?

For further information/guidance on:

Work-related learning in the curriculum – contact the Teaching and Learning Academy, and also the Careers Team
https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/professional-services/teaching-and-learning-academy

Careers, placements contact the Careers Team
https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/careers/

LJMU's Placement Learning Code of Practice:
https://policies.ljmu.ac.uk/UserHome/Policies/Default.aspx

Market research and marketing contact Marketing and Corporate Communications,
https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/corporatecommunications/

Student recruitment and admissions – contact https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/studentrecruitment/

Want to know more?

The Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services (AGCAS) is the professional association for higher education careers advisers and its website has many useful links to employability resources and reports. http://www.agcas.org.uk

Higher Education Academy resources on employability
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/strategic-priorities/employability

Work-related learning in higher education, Neil Moreland
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/work-related-learning-higher-education-neil-moreland

Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU) The website includes the latest graduate salary and job market information along with various reports and project outcomes. http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/

Knight, P. and Page, A. *A study of the assessment of wicked competences* (2007) Open University 'Wicked' competences are those which are hard to define and assess. They are the competences (often skills and other complex achievements) that graduate employers say they value.http://www.open.ac.uk/opencetl/resources/pbpl-resources/knight-p-and-page-2007-study-the-assessment-wicked-competencies-final-report

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B10 Managing Higher Education provision with others (Dec 2012)

A well-designed curriculum takes account of the learning environment, resources and staffing

How will the learning environment – the likely classrooms, laboratories, study facilities and the timetable affect the design and delivery of the programme? How can the team make best use of the available resources? Do the timetable and the estate provide opportunities for students to mix and to work together on tasks? Are rooms suitable for the delivery of the curriculum e.g. small group work and large lectures, practicals etc.? Has consideration been given to alternative ways of delivery? National Student Survey results indicate that students value being in small groups but this is unlikely to be available in all modules across the programme. Consider the mix of the students on the programme and whether there are likely to be practical difficulties for students to meet outside of timetabled hours. Can small group working be encouraged in other ways? LJMU's institutional virtual learning environment (VLE), Canvas, can provide students with opportunities to interact with each other and with curriculum material in ways that may be not possible, or in which the students may have been unwilling to participate in, with more traditional teaching. Programme teams could discuss the use of interactive packages, quizzes, on-line discussions, Twitter, Facebook and lecture capture. Would the use of the various technological applications enhance the learning?

With computer-supported and -mediated learning there are opportunities to offer flexibility of pace, place and mode; for example, pacing can be controlled by the student accessing material within a wider or more flexible window of availability than is normally viable; the place of learning – accessing lecture presentations, notes and resources - can be anywhere with Internet connections; progress

Different learning technology tools can be used to support student self and peer assessment, student self-reflection and PDP activities, groupwork, on-line examinations and plagiarism deterrence or detection. Existing tools continue to be augmented and new tools emerge overtime. Programme teams could seek advice from local and institutional support services to optimise opportunities. The 'Help' tab in Canvas has links to resources about the use of technology or contact the Teaching and Learning Academy for information and support with applications. https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/teaching-and-learning-academy

Questions that could be used in discussion with the programme team:

- How is delivery of the curriculum affected by the rooms available?
- Does the delivery of the curriculum include small group activities?
- How are digital technologies changing the subject area or profession?
- Is there a programme team approach to using technology – are students involved in being repeatedly asked, for example, to develop on-line materials or does something like this only happen rarely?
- How confident are staff in their knowledge and use of technology?
- Does the programme team have access to technical support staff who could help staff use technology?
- Does the team liaise with Library Services and the Teaching and Learning Academy in relation to technology enhanced learning?
- Does the programme help develop an environment for learning that uses spaces and interactions outside the formal curriculum, particularly through the use of new technologies and co-curricular activities?
- Does the programme incorporate new research tools and techniques that require different ways of teaching and learning?
- Does the programme team have an on-line professional identity? In what ways could this be developed?
- Are students involved in developing a professional on-line presence?
- Does the programme develop skills that can used in both familiar and unfamiliar circumstances? Can technology be used in this development?

Checklist

Has the programme team discussed:

- resource and staffing needs and fed information into the business plan
- a policy and strategy for technology enhanced learning

For further information/guidance on:

Business plan and resources - contact the Director of School and Academic Planning and Information Services: https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/structure/professional-services/academic-registry

Learning technologies - contact the Teaching and Learning Academy
https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/teaching-and-learning-academy

Want to know more?

The Association for Learning Technology (ALT) http://www.alt.ac.uk/ is an educational organisation which seeks to bring together all those with an interest in the use of learning technology in higher and further education. LJMU is an institutional member and university staff are thus entitled to discounts at ALT workshops and conferences.

Armellini, A. and Jones, S. (2008) *Carpe Diem: seizing each day to foster change in e-learning design* Reflecting Education Vol 4, No 1
http://www.reflectingeducation.net/index.php/reflecting/article/view/52

Gordon, N. *Flexible pedagogies: technology enhanced learning, preparing for the future* (2014) York Higher Education Academy https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/flexible-pedagogies-technology-enhanced-learning

Higher Education Academy Knowledge Hub, a searchable database of resources:
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hub

The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) http://www.jisc.ac.uk/ is funded by the UKHE and FE funding bodies to provide leadership in the innovative use of ICT to support education and research.

Summary

When designing or re-designing a programme the programme team should:

- Develop outline ideas – justify demand
- Evaluate past performance, get feedback
- Get together programme team to discuss and agree aims and purpose
- Consider resourcing
- Get outline approval via Academic Planning Panel
- Conform to LJMU regulations
- Work within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- Work within the QAA Quality Code
- Work within LJMU's Strategic Plan
- Discuss and agree a programme specification
- Be aware of relevant benchmark statements and any other relevant professional body regulations or applicable national policy
- Be aware of and plan accordingly for the background knowledge and skills of the students
- Be inclusive and accessible

- Ensure that knowledge and skills outlined in the programme specification are obtainable by students
- Consider teaching learning and assessment strategies across the programme
- Know what documentation is required
- Complete relevant processes
- Evaluate.

"Several aspects of educational provision are known to predict both student performance and learning gains, independently of other variables such as resources, research performance and student entry standards. The most significant are class size, cohort size, extent of close contact with teachers, the quality of the teachers, the extent and timing of feedback on assignments and the extent of collaborative learning" (Implications of 'Dimensions of Quality' in a Market Environment, Graham Gibbs, 2012 HEA)
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/hea_dimensions_of_quality_2.pdf
For further information about this Curriculum Design Guide or any of the areas it covers contact the Teaching and Learning Academy https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/teaching-and-learning-academy or use the resources database of the Higher Education Academy http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/

Acknowledgements
Many thanks to all those writers whose papers and web sites are quoted in the references which appear throughout the guide.

Liz Clifford,
Educational Enhancement Co-ordinator,
Teaching and Learning Academy.

Appendix A – Key Dates: Annual Calendar for Programme Leaders

The LJMU Academic calendar for 2018-19 and a provisional calendar for 2019-20 can be found here https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/students/supporting-your-study/calendars-and-timetables

This calendar and other key information for Programme Leaders is also available in the Guidance for Programme Leaders 2018/19, available from Academic Registry, contact: FacultyRegistrars@ljmu.ac.uk

August

- ☐ Ensure that Programme Guides are written for the forthcoming academic year, and are available to all new and returning students via the Programme Information Sharepoint Site. Students access Programme Guides via the MyLJMU portal.
- ☐ Make sure any induction documents, programme material is ready and/or on its way
- ☐ 10 August 2018 is the University deadline for student submission of referral and deferral coursework.
- ☐ 13-17 August 2018 referral and deferral examinations (note: at the end of the 2018-19 academic year, the referral and deferral will move to July, as below)
- ☐ Liaise regularly with the Faculty Recruitment Team regarding admissions, ensuring arrangements are in place to reply to any student queries and questions either on line, via phone or in person
- ☐ 16 August 2018. – 'A' level results day, clearing begins. From the beginning of this week, admissions staff will have the results of those holding offers. The Faculty Recruitment Team may consult with you on those who fail to meet offers.
- ☐ Get updates from the Faculty Recruitment Team of approximate number of new students on every level of the programme in every mode of attendance
- ☐ Make sure accurate and welcoming material is available online by mid-August for September starters
- ☐ Finalise staffing, accommodation, induction, timetabling, sessional lecturers accordingly
- ☐ Obtain reports from last year's external examiners, if not already seen. Reports should have been submitted no later than 1 July for standard-calendar boards and within one month of the Board of Examiners for non-standard calendar programmes.
- ☐ Respond to the external examiners' reports and send to the Director of School for approval. The Director of School will forward the approved response to the QEO who will send the response to the examiner and the programme team. An overview of the external examiner reporting and response process is available in the LJMU Guidance for External Examining **here**
- ☐ Ensure staff availability for induction, and Boards of Examiners in September
- ☐ Finalise details for induction for returning students and direct entry students
- ☐ International students – some arrive early and others late – check arrangements
- ☐ Tuesday 28 August 2018: Mark finalisation deadline. This is the deadline by which all fully moderated marks must finalised and in the Student Record System.

September

- ☐ 3 September 2018 – the deadline by which all Board of Examiners meetings have to be held to consider the performance of students issued with referral and/or deferral assessments in June 2018.
- ☐ 6 September 2018: Results Notification Day.
- ☐ Make arrangements for counselling of students after referrals

- ☐ Carry on with recruitment as necessary
- ☐ Obtain the approval of external examiners for the form and content of all summative assessments, including referral/deferral assessments. All assessments, including referral and deferral requirements, need to be included in each module guide.
- ☐ Agree with the External Examiner a schedule for the forthcoming academic year, making it clear when they will receive sample assessments and when they will be required to provide feedback.
- ☐ Make final arrangements for enrolment and induction week(s); check arrangements for students who have not enrolled on line; chase up missing /unenrolled and non-returning students
- ☐ Finalise staffing and timetabling
- ☐ Ensure all staff are aware of any new University initiatives and changes to procedure to regulations or procedures; ensure appropriate staff training/information sessions
- ☐ Check arrangements for allocation of personal tutors to new students
- ☐ Consider holding a team meeting
  Check arrangements for personal tutors/review meetings
- ☐ Ensure that module guides contain all the required information and are available on Canvas
- ☐ Induction – check arrangements
- ☐ Get updates on numbers enrolled on every level of the programme in every mode of attendance
- ☐ Make sure any arrangements for identifying and working with any disabled students are in place
- ☐ Consider arrangements for new international students
- ☐ 17 – 21 September 2018 Promote and support active involvement of both students and staff during induction –
- ☐ Monday 24 September 2018 – teaching begins
- ☐ Thursday 27 September - As part of the University's Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement Processes (CME, full guidance available **here**), this is the deadline for programme leaders to update their Programme Enhancement and Development Plan
- ☐ Enrolment – liaise with staff to make sure students are entered on all modules on SIS correctly by the module registration deadline of 5 October 2018
- ☐ Make sure arrangements are in place for student late arrivals / ensure staff are aware of late arrivals
- ☐ Make sure arrangements are in place to help students settle into their programme; that there is a system to identify students who are not attending and that arrangements are in place to contact and support such students
- ☐ Chase up any missing external examiner reports and make sure that external examiners have received a response to their report.
- ☐ Print off photo class lists.
- ☐ Evaluate programme data, using WebHUB, and student feedback, both formal and informal.
- ☐ Meet any newly appointed External Examiners at the External Examiner Briefing Day
- ☐ Annual check of PSRB activity. The QEO and Faculty Registrar will request access to relevant circulation/mailing lists for receipt of programme related notifications from PSRBs. For collaborative provision, the Link Tutor should also seek access. QEOs and Faculty Registrars will utilise the PSRB Register to cross-check with Programme Specifications in order to ensure that they accurately reflect programme accreditation. In September FQAECs will receive the Faculty's current PSRB register along with the schedule of planned activity for the forthcoming year.

October

- ☐ 5 October 2018 – Module Registration Deadline – this is the date by which all students must be registered on all modules. This is also the deadline for receiving applications from current students for a transfer of programme.
- ☐ Check with staff that any late arrivals have been enrolled
- ☐ Check module enrolment numbers are accurate on SIS – HESES return based on numbers as at 1 December 2018
- ☐ Arrange for election of student representatives on the Board of Study. Confirm date of Board of Study meeting to consider student feedback
- ☐ Board of Study (formal agenda items must include: student feedback; consideration and approval of annual monitoring report (including external examiner reports and responses; internal and external survey results);
- ☐ Check admissions requirements for next year - sort out targets, liaise with the Faculty Recruitment Team, ensure relevant staff are up to date with nature of the programme, likely entry qualifications, background of applicants etc
- ☐ Is extra marketing/staff training required?
- ☐ Any new programmes being planned? These can require a 22-month lead in time (see **note 3** below). The Guidance for Validation is **here**
- ☐ Are there any programmes that have not recruited well or have other difficulties that need resolving?
- ☐ Make sure students are receiving early feedback; chase up students who are not attending
- ☐ Check tutorials/PDP is working – that all students have an allocated personal tutor. Policies on PDP and Personal Tutoring are found in the **LJMU Policy Centre**
- ☐ Check that any plans for activities during Directed Study Week are in place.

November

- ☐ 5 – 9 November 2018 – Directed Study Week
- ☐ Check procedures for any semester one assessments, i.e. that staff and students are aware of arrangements, submission and marking deadlines
- ☐ Check applications for next year - any action required? e.g. changing standard offer, more publicity
- ☐ Arrange to find new external examiners if any required for September 2019. Liaise with the Quality Enhancement Officer
- ☐ Ensure that non-attending students are contacted and appropriate support given

December

- ☐ Check arrangements for teaching in the New Year – accommodation, new staffing requests, timetabling, field trips etc.
- ☐ Check if there are any module questionnaires available or other student surveys to administer
- ☐ Check applications for next year - any action required

CHRISTMAS

January

- ☐ Arrange training/go on training for chairing Boards of Examiners
- ☐ 7 – 18 January 2019 – semester 1 assessment weeks
- ☐ Finalise arrangements for any January starters

- ☐ Monitor students' progress – liaise with tutors; ensure students are receiving formative feedback
- ☐ Consider team approach to students with difficulties – progress reviews, extra support etc.
- ☐ Check applications/numbers for next year - any additional action required
- ☐ Targets for recruitment are being discussed now – check with School Director/Dean
- ☐ Make sure students are aware of the National Student Survey and ask them to complete them when it opens
- ☐ Meet any newly appointed External Examiners at the External Examiner Briefing Day

February

- ☐ 8 February 2019: Mark Finalisation Deadline for all semester 1 modules.
- ☐ Confirm date of Board of Study meeting to review the programme, to consider any module and programme amendments; student feedback and survey results
- ☐ Board of Study (formal agenda items must include: student feedback; module and programme amendments; consideration of Programme Enhancement and Development Plans)
- ☐ Check that any plans for activities during Directed Study Week are in place.
- ☐ 25 February 2019 Results Notification Day for those semesterised programmes holding mid-year Boards of Examiners meetings
- ☐ Ensure that all students are given an opportunity to meet with their personal tutors to discuss their performance in assessments.
- ☐ 28 February 2019. All changes to the provision of options in the 2019-20 academic year have to be made on PRODCAT on or before this date. This is to facilitate online module selection.

March

- ☐ 4 – 8 March 2019 – Directed Study Week
- ☐ Update undergraduate course leaflets for open days
- ☐ Online module selection begins
- ☐ Check arrangements for personal tutor/PDP reviews
- ☐ Check external examiners are in place for the forthcoming year, including whether any new appointments have been approved by the Faculty/University, and supplied with current programme documentation
- ☐ Liaise with external examiners re moderation and assessment meetings
- ☐ Consider revision classes and revision materials on Canvas
- ☐ 22 March 2019 deadline - Following the receipt of module evaluations from module leaders, and using the template downloaded from WebHub, produce a Programme Enhancement and Development Plan (Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement full guidance available here)

April

- ☐ Start thinking about next year's induction activities
- ☐ Start work on next year's Programme Guide
- ☐ Liaise with staff about mark submission
- ☐ Make sure staff are aware of deadlines, procedures for exams
- ☐ Spring Break 15 – 26 April 2019
- ☐ 29 April -Assessment weeks start for semester 2 and year-long modules.
- ☐ Boards of Examiners – make sure staff are up to date with current University and programme regulations

May

- ☐ The UNISTATS WebHub tool is populated for Programme Leaders to confirm relevant data for inclusion in the University's UNISTATS submission to HESA.
- ☐ 3 May 2019 – University Coursework Deadline
- ☐ Confirm accuracy of programme data to be included in the institutional UNISTATS return to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
- ☐ Arrange farewell activities (staff and students)
- ☐ Check again the accuracy of programme information on the student information system and the accuracy of the programme specification. Liaise with the Quality Enhancement Officer with regard to any amendments to modules or to postgraduate programmes by the end of May
  Friday 31 May 2019– mark finalisation deadline. Liaise with the Faculty Registrar in order to resolve any marking, moderation and assessment queries in advance of this deadline.

June

- ☐ Friday 7 June 2019 – the deadline for holding a Board of Examiners meeting
- ☐ Check arrangements for counselling students following results
- ☐ Mon 17 June 2019 – results notification day for standard calendar programmes
- ☐ 24 June 2019 - Deadline or Programme Teams to complete review and evaluation of programme performance and update Enhancement and Development Plans.
- ☐ Confirm UNISTATS data by the deadline
- ☐ LJMU Teaching and Learning conference
- ☐ Update leaflets for post-graduate programmes
- ☐ Following the receipt of module evaluations from module leaders, update the Programme Enhancement and Development Plan (Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement full guidance available here).

July

- ☐ 1 – 5 July 2019 – Referral and deferral examinations
- ☐ 5 July 2019 is the University deadline for student submission of referral and deferral coursework.
- ☐ 8 – 12 July 2019 Graduation ceremonies
- ☐ 25 July 2019 – the deadline for holding a referral/deferral Board of Examiners meeting
- ☐ Prepare responses to external examiners' reports, if available
- ☐ Make sure accurate and welcoming material is going to be available online by mid-August for September starters
- ☐ Agree Board of Study dates for following year for inclusion in guides
- ☐ Finalise update of programme guides
- ☐ Finalise information for pre-induction websites and social networking sites

Note 1: Guidance can be taken sought from Subject Leaders and Directors of School regarding the appropriate devolution of responsibility for some of the above activities.

Note 2: Separate deadlines for drafting publicity materials for your programme are listed in section 2 below.

Note 3: During the course of the academic year, there are rolling deadlines for the provision of feedback to students of 15 working days from an assessment deadline, and 25 working days for marks to be inputted into the Student Record System. These marks should be internally and externally moderated according to the Moderation Policy found on the **LJMU Policy Centre**

Note 4: There are a set of rolling deadlines for the submission of proposals for new programmes.

Deadline for new programme approval for UCAS recruiting programmes (initial cohort enrolment -18 months)
Deadline for new programme approval for PGT programmes (-12 months)
Deadline for new collaborative programme approval (-9 months)
Deadline for approval of new fulltime closed client group provision (-3 months)
Deadline for programme validation (-9 months UG, -4 months TPG)
Deadline for changes for following year (-2 months)

Appendix B - University Policy on Feedback for Students: The policy is available on the website

https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-policy and also via LJMU's Policy Centre

All programmes must have a feedback strategy, in accordance with Academic Board policy, which explains the purpose of feedback (diagnostic, formative and summative) and how and when feedback will be provided. Documentation for students must specify how and when students will receive feedback, including feedback on examinations.

Definitions

Summative feedback is primarily provided to students to give marks / comments on their attainment. It is used to indicate the extent of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria of the task. Summative feedback may have a formative function such as providing comments on examination or essay technique, which may help a student in subsequent examinations.

Diagnostic feedback would follow diagnostic assessment of some kind that is ideally carried out before, or at the start of a programme/module. In this way the abilities and knowledge base of each student could be identified before formal study begins.

Formative feedback is concerned with helping students improve. It is designed to help students learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained.

Ipsative feedback is where students are assessed against their own previous performance and feedback is provided in terms of the improvement made to their skills, knowledge and competence since the last time they were assessed on the subject.

These types of feedback are not mutually exclusive as an assessment could, for example, be both summative and formative where feedback is formative about the skills involved and summative about the content.

Providing **formative feedback** should not be interpreted as a requirement to read and comment on draft work. There are other ways of providing formative feedback which are a more efficient use of staff time and potentially more useful in terms of developing learning. Here are a few suggestions:

- Encourage students to do tests, multiple choice questions, on Canvas, in their own time. No marks given for this but in the summative assessment the questions are taken from those on Canvas
- Use students to provide feedback to each other. Mark only the final piece of work
- Use of in class communication tools – Adobe Connect and personal response systems can give immediate feedback to students. Students' responses can be kept anonymous
- Invite students to discuss feedback. Ask them to provide an example of helpful feedback and to identify why they regarded it as helpful
- Discuss assessment criteria and student answers, good, poor and indifferent – why is this piece of work better than this one

- A marking workshop prior to an assessment is likely to improve students' understanding
- Require students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of the module via evidence of their own choice
- Provide computerised feedback statements
- Students could discuss with each other what tutors' comments mean. Discuss comments made on previous students' work
- Consider the assessment strategy across the programme ensuring that students are given practice in assessment activities before being expected to engage in them - e.g. marking exercises and discussion of criteria before asking them to self or peer assess or undertaking preliminary work in groups before an assessment of a group exercise
- Ask students to estimate the mark from the feedback they have received
- Consider whether performance in a coursework assessment such as in-class tasks could provide exemption from a later examination. This would be likely to lead to increased attendance and motivation from students and increased feedback and learning from the class activity

Feedback should be given to students as soon as possible. Feedback can include marks and can be given prior to a Board of Examiners provided it is clear that any such marks are provisional. LJMU policy is that students should normally have feedback within three weeks of the submission deadline. In this context feedback can mean marks. However there is a difference between feedback and marks. If staff are able to give feedback within the required three weeks which is more than just marks then it is worth considering whether to initially provide feedback without marks. This encourages the students to read the feedback rather than just concentrating on the mark when the mark is given alongside the feedback. There are then opportunities to discuss the feedback with the students, for example, asking them how they could improve the work and what mark would they give and so on.

Effective programme feedback

Feedback is fundamental to student learning. With semesterisation it is important to continue to provide opportunities for formative feedback, providing time for more effective front-loaded feedback that can impact directly on the quality of the student learning. Despite an improvement in satisfaction scores feedback remains the aspect of learning with which students are least satisfied. This is demonstrated both within LJMU and nationally in recent National Student Surveys. Lack of promptness and a perceived absence of feedback that aids understanding are the key areas of dissatisfaction.

With smaller modules programme teams may like to consider how feedback on one assessment in one module can be used as feed forward for another module. Module or programme handbooks should include an explanation of the purpose of feedback and how and when feedback will be provided.

Students' expectations of feedback

It is often reported that there is a mismatch between staff perceptions about the usefulness and timeliness of the feedback provided and student perceptions of the same. Communicating with students is an essential first step in ensuring that students recognise what is feedback. Feedback can be individual written comments on a marksheet but it can also be a whole class discussion of

common mistakes or of what makes a first class answer. Tell students when they are receiving feedback.

Involving students in the process of feedback and feed forward

This could be done via:

- asking students to evaluate each others' work, model answers or examples of work
- using on-line discussions
- requiring students to self-evaluate their work, with action points for future work
- asking students to say what aspects of the work they want feedback on
- requiring students to say how they have taken into account comments made on earlier work by tutors or other students, in later work

Students may question their ability to provide feedback or be worried about both giving and receiving feedback from colleagues on the programme. Discuss with the students using the assessment criteria and principles of feedback. When first introducing peer feedback consider letting students choose a level of feedback with which they are comfortable; e.g. level one – please provide only positive statements; level two – provide positive statements and constructive comments; level 3 – say what you like.

Faculty of Science Tutorial on Feedback

Aims:

1. To explain to students what feedback is and the different forms that it can take
2. To develop realistic student expectations about feedback
3. To convey the message that feedback is not simply a justification for the mark: identified strengths and weaknesses should be considered.
4. To learn from students want they expect in terms of feedback and/or what feedback means to them.

Suggested Structure:
Time required = ~ 20 minutes

Preamble
It is suggested that you commence the tutorial with a brief discussion of existing marking and feedback practices, based on your experience. Explain that all marking is done 'in-house', and a sample may be double marked before validation by an External Examiner according to the University's moderation policy. Perhaps include illustrative time scales to convey the time needed to mark work e.g. 30 students x 10 minutes = 5 hours. Stress that the University policy is feedback within 15 working days, so this does not include weekends and is effectively 3 weeks. Note that there is always a compromise between detailed feedback returned only after a few weeks and superficial feedback returned within a few days.

It is also worth stressing that programmes try as far as possible to avoid the clustering of assignment deadlines but it is not possible to evenly distribute deadlines. In the first few weeks, students will not have had sufficient taught sessions for there to be associated coursework to be submitted.

Discussion questions

1. Ask students to name some different types of feedback, and different ways that feedback can be provided.

There might be a range of responses here, including:

- Written comments on work
- Peer discussions and peer assessment
- Conversations with staff in corridors/after lectures
- % marks
- Email exchanges
- A physical reaction e.g. a raised eyebrow

Summarise that feedback types can be informal or formal, and may be visual or spoken.

2. Ask the group to define feedback.

Students should recognise that feedback is information from staff or peers that provides guidance on progress. For summative assessments, e.g. final year report, it might also be used to justify a mark.

3. Ask students what they do with feedback.

Students need to recognise that feedback should be accorded the same (higher?) status as lecture notes. They should reflect on comments received and identify the areas where they did well, areas for improvement and any action required on their part. Clarification should be sought from the provider of the feedback, were required. In this way, they will be prepared for future activities.

Summary for students

Find out what is required before starting a task or assignment
Ensure that you schedule sufficient time to complete the task
Evaluate your own work before handing it in
Discuss the feedback that you receive with others
Be willing to participate in peer assessment activities
Actively seek feedback from a variety of sources
Consider both the strengths and weaknesses identified in your feedback
Keep your feedback, reflect and use it to prepare for future work and activities. Revisit, as required, to assess your progress
Adapted from, 'Feedback is a dialogue', University of Strathclyde, 2011
http://www.reap.ac.uk/Portals/101/student_leaflet.pdf

Student assessment deadlines will be published alongside University feedback deadlines

When module details are entered onto the Student Information System assessment item deadlines and a feedback date are required. It is possible to alter dates after they have been entered but once students have been informed of the dates it is advisable not to alter them in order to avoid confusion. Where it is unavoidable new dates must be given in writing. Information should be circulated in class, e-mailed to students, announced on Canvas and altered on SIS.

Feedback will be available 15 working days after the assessment deadline

If there are particular reasons why it is not possible to provide feedback within this deadline students should be informed in advance of the reasons and given an alternative timescale.

Examinations and dissertations are exempt from this requirement. Where this deadline is not feasible for operational reasons, such as rotating laboratory classes, this must be stated in the module/programme guide. 'Working days' exclude Saturday and Sunday, bank holidays and any other day on which the University is closed. Staff leave is included as a working day.

Arrangements must be in place for the secure return of assessed work.

Feedback will relate to the assessment criteria

It is a University requirement that all assessments have defined criteria, published in advance. Students must be assessed against the published criteria and the feedback should relate specifically to the criteria. There will be generic criteria specified in programme documentation in terms of grading and classification – what constitutes a first class essay or lab report at specific level. In addition there must be clear and explicit criteria for the assessment task. These should be known, and ideally discussed in advance, by the students and used as the basis for feedback. Feed forward, such as the discussion of criteria or model answers in advance of the student attempting the assessment, is a useful way of developing the student's ability to assess their own work, and to improve their learning.

Further information and examples of assessment grading criteria

Criteria needs to be meaningful to students and discussed with them. The descriptors in Appendix D are broad general statements. They are not subject - specific and must therefore be read and used in conjunction with the specific learning outcomes attached to each programme and module. Assessment criteria are directly related to learning outcomes.

Students will be entitled to face-to-face feedback on their first piece of assessed work

Students regard personal contact as very important and a welcome opportunity to ask questions about the programme. Such meetings are particularly important where there are very large classes. Early feedback could be delivered in a personal tutor meeting, a PDP tutorial covering all modules, via a skills module or in any module where a quick early coursework task, or diagnostic work done as part of induction, could be given.

Audio feedback by e mail, whilst an excellent means of providing personalised feedback is not appropriate for this first piece of assessed work. Programme teams need to decide which modules they wish to focus on for this early feedback opportunity.

Feedback can be given in a group setting. It is important that students are given early feedback at every level in order to advise and encourage students.

Mid - year assessment and feedback

With two semesters and mid-year assessment students will expect feedback mid-year. Students may want advice and encouragement to stay motivated if they have not done well. Personal tutorials offer an opportunity to discuss with students strategies for improvement and assistance with studying for referrals/resubmission of failed assessment items. The programme team could consider offering more formative feedback opportunities to students who have failed first semester modules.

End of year feedback

Organise and communicate the arrangements for end of year feedback, including feedback on examinations and feedback for referral students.

Feedback on examinations

Feedback strategy and documentation must include detail on how students receive feedback on examinations. Staff should

- Identify how feedback on examinations is given, when it is given and what actions, if any, students are expected to take as a result of the feedback. The strategy should give a realistic expectation to students about the nature of the feedback they are likely to receive.
- Specify in programme handbooks how feedback on examinations is provided;
- Provide general comments in module handbooks on the previous cohort's examination performance where applicable;
- Publicise arrangements in programme and module handbooks and elsewhere (Bb, lectures) whereby students can arrange, on request, for one to one feedback on their examination performance from the module leader. Such a request should be within a set timescale.
- Provide some information about examination performance of the module cohort on Bb, e.g. range of marks obtained in the examination, median mark;
- Include provision for feedback for referral students, including any final year students, prior to the referral assessment. This does not necessarily mean an individual meeting with a student. This could be an e mail or oral feedback to referral students with comments providing explanations for the most common reasons for failure and / or suggestions for further study prior to the referral examination.
- Ensure that if an examination is the only summative assessment for a module, opportunities for formative feedback (feed forward) must be provided in advance of the examination as well as feedback after the examination. For example, an opportunity could be a discussion of a past paper or of a revision exercise or plan.
- Note that feedback on final year final semester examinations can be exempt from this strategy, except where a part time student is taking such an examination and is continuing to study in the next academic year.

The programme leader is responsible for ensuring that the programme has a feedback strategy but it is expected that all members of the team will contribute to it. The module leader is responsible for ensuring that feedback is made available on their module, although individual members of staff who contribute to a module may provide feedback.

Suggestions on providing examination feedback

- provision of general comments made by an examiner posted on Canvas or via e mail;
- comments providing information about good, satisfactory and failed answers posted on Canvas or sent via e mail;

- providing opportunities for students to meet individually on request with a tutor and to go through their own examination script. To be requested within a set timescale;
- feedback as part of a PDP meeting, progress review or personal tutor interview;
- provision of model answers on Canvas;
- common errors, list of points that should have been covered etc to be available to students
- general feedback in class;
- general oral feedback, e.g. via podcasting, Adobe Connect or other audio files;
- individual written feedback;
- displaying a summary of comments for each question on a student notice board.

An examination is no different from any other form of assessment. There is, therefore, a requirement for transparency, (QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, chapter B6, Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning, indicator 2) and feedback (indicator 9). It is inappropriate to maintain secrecy about how students achieve their marks in examinations. When asked, students are concerned about feedback on examinations and do expect to receive feedback, even if they may not use it. Whilst it is likely that programme teams will provide generic feedback, with opportunities for individual feedback where requested, it is recognised that 'a one size fits all' approach is not appropriate. Programme teams are expected to develop a strategy for feedback on examinations that is practical, realistic, appropriate to the programme and its students.

Strategies for giving feedback

Written comments on students' assessed work		
Advantages	**Disadvantages**	**Best practice**
Personal, individualized Regarded as authoritative and credible Targets directly actual student submission	• Potentially hard to read if handwritten • Critical feedback may be perceived as threatening or aggressive • Can be time-consuming	• Phrase comments as statements rather than questions • Avoid ticks and crosses without explanations • Re-write student wording to demonstrate improvement
Model answers or solutions issued to students along with their marked work		
Advantages	**Disadvantages**	**Best practice**
• Time saving • Can be issued to students that have missed or been	• Some students may not engage with them or compare them with their own work	• Support model answer with notes re. individual student performance

exempted from an assignment • Provide evidence of standards and expectations	• May give the impression that individuality is not recognised • Can stay in circulation for a number of years	• Show explicitly how model answer relates to question • Indicate where deviation from the model answer is permitted
Assignment return (feedback) sheets		
Advantages	**Disadvantages**	**Best practice**
• Identifies the essential aspects of the assignment • Sets the context for the feedback • Students can directly compare their feedback	• Does not accommodate students that do well in an unanticipated way • Students may query you about difference between their grades • You may want to give feedback outside the pre-set agenda	• Set a flexible feedback agenda so that you can include unanticipated feedback • Design the sheet so that the feedback aligns with the assessment and module learning outcomes
Codes written on student work, debriefed in a whole-group session		
Advantages	**Disadvantages**	**Best practice**
• Time saving • Shows how feedback directly relates to submitted work • De-briefing session is very focused • Highlights where students experience similar difficulties	• Students may lose glossary or not translate codes. • De-briefing session can be tedious for students that have done well • Seems very impersonal.	• Keep coding simple • Focus the de-briefing session on the code interpretation. • Include a personal statement with grade
Oral feedback to whole class		
Advantages	**Disadvantages**	**Best practice**
• Efficient method of getting detailed feedback to a large student cohort • Feedback is strengthened by your physical presence • Students can discuss their marks with you and each other • Can be used in tandem with other methods.	• Feedback is less individual • Only main feedback issues can be covered • Students may focus on one aspect and miss other issues	• Use marking scheme / criteria to explain how marks have been derived • Schedule time for discussion within the session • Support the session with a generic handout covering the main issues
Individual oral feedback		

Advantages	Disadvantages	Best practice
• You can address each student's strengths and weaknesses • Student can ask questions • It can be quicker to talk than write	• Some students may find the situation intimidating • Students may forget certain aspects of the interview • Scheduling appointments is very time consuming	• Have a generic feedback agenda • Suggest that the student makes brief notes • Set a time limit for each interview
E-mailed feedback including e mailed oral feedback		
Advantages	**Disadvantages**	**Best practice**
• You can send it at your convenience and students can read it at theirs • Students can re-refer to feedback • You have an automatic record of your feedback • Can be time saving with cut and paste	• May not be treated as seriously as printed/ handwritten / oral feedback • Students may not have original work with them when they read the feedback • Feedback may be missed amongst general incoming mail	• Attach a read receipt to e-mail so that you know when it has been read • Maintain an authoritative tone, rather than a chatty e-mail style • Ask students to reply if they have any queries

Table adapted from: Race, P. *Using feedback to help students learn.* (2004) The Higher Education Academy https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/using_feedback.pdf and http://phil-race.co.uk/

If you are a Director, programme leader or subject leader, or responsible for assessment within the Faculty:

- consider a strategy or approach for feedback – discuss the student survey results for feedback; consider meeting with the student representatives to discuss the implications of the survey and how feedback can become a joint responsibility; consider how feedback could be improved;
- encourage programme teams to discuss the use of formative feedback within and between semester-long modules;
- ensure that feedback provided is linked to marking and/or grade criteria. It is the grade and marking criteria that distinguish students' performance;
- place an increased emphasis on formative rather than summative assessment in the early stages of a programme;
- identify within the programme where diagnostic and formative assessment takes place;

- consider whether there should be some form of diagnostic activity/engagement with the student prior to entry via a student portal, for example;
- identify strategies for diagnostic assessment and feedback, for example, within tutorial modules;
- consider how to achieve a balance between providing the most useful and timely feedback to students and not overloading staff;
- consider whether there are opportunities to use 'tutorial modules' or personal tutors, or student mentors to help with feedback? Consider how the PDP and personal tutoring process may be used to provide feedback. Are there opportunities to use student mentors or Skills Support Officers/Student Development Co-ordinators in addition to tutors?
- whether there are any modules that encourage personal reflection by students – are these an opportunity to provide or collate feedback from tutors across the programme? Encourage the use of a portfolio / e portfolio. Are staff and students aware of the support materials available on the World of Work site? https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/worldofwork/
- consider how electronic feedback can be used;
- implement a strategy for feedback on examinations and ensure students are aware of the school strategy on examinations.

*If you are a module leader, or responsible for **teaching***

- consider the feedback that is provided. Is there any formative feedback? Is the balance right?
- what opportunities are there to provide immediate feedback?
- what is the School policy on feedback in general, and in particular, following written exams? Who can help?
- what formative feedback is provided to students within semester-long modules?
- explain to students when and where feedback is given and their responsibilities in using feedback to develop their learning;
- consider involving students in providing feedback;
- consider using oral feedback, e.g. via podcasting or other audio formats.

Further information

Contact the Teaching and Learning Academy https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/teaching-and-learning-academy
The 'Help' tab in Canvas also provides a wealth of information and guidance about using technology to provide feedback.

Other resources

Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange (ASKe) - leaflets on using feedback effectively and on how to make feedback work and other assessment topics. http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/

Bloxham, S. & Boyd, P. (2007) *Developing effective assessment in higher education: A practical guide* (Maidenhead, England, Open University Press).

Boud, D. and Falchikov, N. (Eds) *Rethinking assessment in higher education: Learning for the longer term* (Abingdon, Routledge), 14-25.

The University of Edinburgh Enhancing Feedback webpages
http://www.enhancingfeedback.ed.ac.uk/

The FAST project was designed to change assessment so as to support student learning more effectively. http://www.open.ac.uk/fast/

Gibbs, G. & Dunbar-Goddet, H. (2007) *The effects of programme assessment environments on student learning.* Report for HEA (York).

Gibbs, G. & Dunbar-Goddet, H. (2009) Characterising programme-level assessment environments that support learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 34(4), 481-489.

Gibbs, G. and Simpson, C. (2004*) "Does your assessment support your students' learning?" Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, 1.*

The Higher Education Academy's resources
A marked improvement transforming assessment in higher education (2012) HEA
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resources/detail/change/A_marked_improvement_tool

Orsmond, P. Maw, S.J. Park, J.R. Gomez, S. & Crook, A.C. (2013) *Moving feedback forward: theory to practice* Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, Volume 38, Issue 2**,** pages 240-252
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02602938.2011.625472?src=recsys

Price, M. Handley, K. Millar, J. and O'Donovan, B. *Feedback: all that effort, but what is the effect?* Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education Vol. 35, Iss. 3, 2010

Programme Assessment Strategies Project, (PASS) 2009 – 2012. This project confronts a fundamental issue for every HE course/programme leader: how to design an effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable assessment strategy which delivers the key course/programme outcomes.
http://www.pass.brad.ac.uk/

Re-engineering Assessment Practices in Higher Education (REAP)
http://www.reap.ac.uk/

Sadler, D.R. (2005) Interpretations of criteria-based assessment and grading in higher education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. 30 (2) April 2005, pp175-94. Available from: http://www.clinteach.com.au/assets/Interpretations-of-criteria-based-assessment-and-grading-in-higher.pdf Accessed 10 Nov 2015

Transforming the experience of students through assessment **(TESTA)**
This Higher Education Academy funded project across four universities aims to foster deeper

learning across whole programmes and to debunk regulatory myths which prevent assessment for learning. http://www.testa.ac.uk

APPENDIX C Principles for feedback on draft work

Principles for formative feedback - November 2017

At its meeting on 8th June 2016, the Education Committee agreed that the following recommendation from the Liverpool Students' Union Assessment and Feedback Recommendations should be implemented,

> *'Students being offered feedback on samples of their work in order to allow them time to improve before their next deadline'*

This is based on a recognition that formative feedback can enhance motivation, learning and performance, as well as encouraging reflection and clarifying understanding.

Explicit rules of operation through universal strategy or policy are problematic given cultural and disciplinary diversity, the varied nature of assessment and complexities of the feedback process. In recognition of this, Education Committee agreed that the University should consider adopting a series of guiding principles for formative feedback. These have been developed through the University's ADE network and discussed in Faculty Education Committees.

These principles were approved by Education Committee at its meeting, 20th November 2017

The principles are:

- Formative feedback is best addressed as part of a coordinated and explicit programme assessment and feedback strategy.
- Providing feedback to enable students to improve future assessment performance is a function of any feedback strategy. This relies on the provision of transferable ('feed-forward') advice as a key feature of all feedback provision.
- The need for feedback is most pressing in the early stages of a programme, with significantly less need in final assessments.
- Formative feedback is part of a dialogue between students and lecturers about assessment. This requires a degree of shared understanding of assessment practices and standards, coupled with acknowledgement of the roles and responsibilities of both staff and students in the process.
- Feedback on formative work should complement (and be complemented by) guidance, advice and support in class and on the VLE.
- A wide variety of feedback mechanisms are permitted. Hence, feedback may be in written or non-written form and offered on a one-to-one or group basis.
- Formative feedback will be constructive, but not imply final performance or offer an indicative grade.
- Formative feedback works best when opportunities are built into the overall module assessment and feedback strategy.
- Opportunities for formative feedback, as well as mechanisms for the delivery of feedback, will be made clear to students in a timely manner.
- Opportunities to receive feedback on formative/draft work will be timetabled in relation to the submission date to facilitate students' action on feedback.
- Where opportunities for formative feedback are not formalised in module design, student engagement will optional.
- Any mechanism associated with the provision of formative feedback will not explicitly check for academic misconduct.
- Personal tutors will support formative feedback by helping students understand feedback from previous work and signposting them to appropriate support.

- Formative feedback should not result in an additional burden on staff time.
- The provision of formative feedback will necessitate a cultural shift from expectations for substantial feedback on final, substantive assessment tasks.

APPENDIX D - LJMU Grade Descriptors

Grade descriptors are generic statements that describe students' achievement in assessment. They are expressed in a broad and non-specific manner so that they are applicable to a wide range of disciplines and assessment strategies. They confirm the breadth and depth of learning expected and the standard achieved in each grading band.

Grade descriptors clarify to students, staff and external stakeholders about the expectations at specific levels of study. They should be used by academic staff to generate assignment specific marking schemes and criteria. Therefore descriptors should inform, but not replace individual schemes or undermine professional autonomy.

Descriptors have been developed for levels 4-7 and are directly aligned to the QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). There are also descriptors for level 3, developed from Ofqual (2008) Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (Ofqual/08//3726).

The structure of the grade descriptors is based on around the notion of a threshold pass. This articulates the minimum expectation for successful student performance at each level of study. Performance that deviates from that (in either a positive or negative direction) is described using adjectives that have been chose to represent varied degrees of attainment. These are informed by the language that is typically used to describe academic performance (see table 1).

Grade bands span the full mark range to encapsulate a wider performance range and encourage marking across the full scale of available marks.

Grade descriptors are presented in a bullet-pointed and consistent style to illustrate the developmental nature of performance. They include:

1. Level-specific statements that link directly to FHEQ, levels 4-7

2. Standard descriptors relating to:
    - Attainment of learning outcomes
    - Use of evidence
    - Accuracy
    - Argument

These are consistent across all levels, as performance against these will be dependent on the nature of the assessment task that is itself defined by level.

3. The development of academic skill relating to:
    - Writing style
    - Presentation
    - Referencing

This takes into account that these skills are not necessarily level-specific, but expectations regarding a student's skill base will increase for higher levels of study. The focus is on written work, but it is envisaged that the standards implied in these can be translated to non-written tasks.

There is no assumption that descriptors are weighted in any way (e.g. awarding a proportion of marks for referencing).

Table 1: Indicative language for describing academic performance (Adapted from 'Policies and Procedures for the Management of Assessment: Assessment Grading, Criteria and Marking'. Manchester Metropolitan University)

Grade band	**Indicative language**
90%-100%	exceptional, extraordinary, distinctive, remarkable
80%-89	authoritative, creative, exciting, illuminating, insightful, inspiring, outstanding, stimulating.
70%-79%	ambitious, convincing , critical, excellent, meticulous, original, persuasive, sophisticated, unexpected.
60%-69%	analytical, credible, fluent, precise, rigorous thorough.
50%-59%	accurate, careful, clear, coherent, congruent, confident, consistent, effective, good, thoughtful.
40%-49%	adequate, descriptive, satisfactory, straightforward, sufficient, unsophisticated.
30%-39%	contradictory, derivative, inadequate, incomplete, inconsistent, imprecise, inexplicit, limited, unconnected, tangential, superficial, vague.
20%-29%	ambiguous, erroneous, incoherent, inappropriate, insufficient, irrelevant, unstructured, misleading, wrong.
0%-19%	absent, below par, deficient, formless, lacking, missing.

Grade descriptors for Level 3 written work		
Mark range	**characteristic**	**criteria**
90-100	Exceptional Pass	Exemplary attainment of all learning outcomes. Exceptional knowledge of the subject area to address well-defined problems that may be complex and non-routine. Offers a comprehensive exploration of the evidence base. The material covered is accurate and demonstrates an exceptional awareness of differing perspectives. The argument is sophisticated. The standard of writing is refined. No errors in the use of the specified referencing system. Well presented and organised in an academic style.
80 - 89	Outstanding Pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an exemplary standard. Outstanding knowledge of the subject area to address well-defined problems that may be complex and non-routine. Extends beyond expected levels of engagement with the evidence base. The material covered is accurate and demonstrates an outstanding awareness of differing perspectives. The standard of writing is advanced. No errors in the use of the specified referencing system. Well presented and organised in an academic style.
70 - 79	Excellent Pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes. Excellent knowledge of the subject area to address well-defined problems that may be complex and non-routine. Thorough use of the evidence base. The material covered is accurate and demonstrates an excellent awareness of differing perspectives. The argument is persuasive and there are perceptive elements. The standard of writing is clear and readable with some sophisticated phrasing. Only minor errors in the use of the specified referencing system. Well presented and organised in an academic style.
60 - 69	Good Pass	Good attainment of all learning outcomes. Good knowledge of the subject area to address well-defined problems that may be complex and non-routine. Good consideration of the evidence base that develops from recommended reading. The material covered is accurate and demonstrates a good awareness of differing perspectives. The argument is persuasive. The standard of writing is clear and readable.

		Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system. Generally well presented and organised, but does not always conform to conventions of academic presentation.
50 - 59	Clear Pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to a good standard. Clear knowledge of the subject area to address well-defined problems that may be complex and non-routine. Consideration of the evidence base, but little consideration beyond recommended reading. The material covered is mostly accurate and demonstrates an adequate awareness of differing perspectives. The argument is straightforward and relatively clear. The standard of writing is reasonable but there are areas of confusion and/or errors in spelling/grammar. Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system. Good presentation that may include some organisational errors and/or tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation.
40 - 49	Threshold / Satisfactory Pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes. Meets threshold knowledge of the of the subject area to address well-defined problems that may be complex and non-routine. A basic consideration of the evidence base, but restricted to recommended reading. There are some inaccuracies or irrelevant materials, but there is sufficient accurate material to suggest a threshold level of understanding and awareness of differing perspectives. The argument is relatively clear, although some elements are difficult to understand. The standard of writing is acceptable but there are some areas of confusion and/or some errors in spelling/grammar. Attempts to use of the specified referencing system but there are systematic errors. Acceptable presentation that may include some organisational errors and does not to conform to conventions of academic presentation.
30 - 39	Needs improvement	Meets most, but not all learning outcomes. Insufficient knowledge of the of the subject area in addressing well-defined problems that may be complex and non-routine. Minor consideration of the evidence base, but inadequate use of recommended reading and no exploration outside that. Some material is accurate, but the amount of inaccurate or irrelevant materials indicates insufficient understanding of key concepts and differing perspectives. The argument is poor and inadequately defended. The standard of writing is weak.

		Attempts to use of the specified referencing system but there are significant errors. Generally weak or untidy presentation that may include some organisational errors and does not to conform to conventions of academic presentation.
20 - 29	Needs significant revision	Does not meet most learning outcomes. Poor knowledge of the subject area in addressing well-defined problems that may be complex and non-routine. Superficial consideration of the evidence base. There are major inaccuracies or significant amounts of irrelevant material and limited awareness of differing perspectives. The argument is very weak. The standard of writing is poor. Does not use the specified referencing system. Weak and untidy presentation.

Grade descriptors for Level 4 written work		
Mark range	**characteristic**	**criteria**
90-100	Exceptional Pass	Exemplary attainment of all learning outcomes Exceptional knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area Offers an exhaustive exploration of the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is highly sophisticated The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
80-89	Outstanding Pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an exemplary standard Outstanding knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area Extends far beyond expected levels of engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is generally very astute The standard of writing is highly advanced No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
70-79	Excellent pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes Excellent knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area Thorough use the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive and there are very perceptive elements The standard of writing is well clear and readable, with some sophisticated phrasing Only minor errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
60-69	Good Pass	Good attainment of all learning outcomes Good knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area Good consideration of the literature and evidence-base that develops from recommended readings The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive The standard of writing is clear and readable. Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles Generally well presented and organised, but does not always conform to conventions of academic presentation
50-59	Clear Pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an good standard

		Clear knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area Sufficient consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but little consideration beyond recommended readings The material covered is mostly accurate and relevant The argument is straightforward and relatively clear The standard of writing is reasonable and there are very few areas of confusion and/or errors in spelling/grammar. Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles Good presentation that may include some organisational errors and/or tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation
40-49	Threshold / satisfactory pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes Meets threshold knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area Basic consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but restricted to recommended readings There are some inaccuracies or irrelevant materials, but there is sufficient accurate material to suggest a threshold level of understanding The argument is relatively clear, although some elements are difficult to understand Standard of writing is acceptable. The structure is reasonable, but there are some areas of confusion and/or some errors in spelling/grammar Attempts to use of the specified referencing system. Meets key principles, but there are systematic errors Acceptable presentation that may include some organisational errors and a tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation
30-39	Needs improvement	Meets most, but not all learning outcomes insufficient knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area Minor consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but inadequate use of recommended reading and no exploration outside that. Some materials is accurate, but the amount of inaccurate or irrelevant materials indicates insufficient understanding of key concepts The argument is poorly defined and defended Standard of writing tends to be weak. The structure is confused and/or there are numerous errors in spelling/grammar. Attempts to use the specified referencing system, but there are significant errors Generally weak or untidy presentation that may include some organisational errors and does not to conform to conventions of academic presentation
20-29	Needs significant revision	Does not meet most learning outcomes Poor knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area Superficial consideration of the literature and evidence-base There are major inaccuracies or significant amounts of irrelevant The argument is very weak Standard of writing is poor. The structure is disorganised and/or there are too many errors in spelling/grammar. Does not use the specified referencing system

		Weak or untidy presentation
0-19	Needs substantial work	Does not meet any learning outcomes Little or no knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area No engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is inaccurate or irrelevant The argument is incoherent Standard of writing is very poor. The structure is chaotic and/or there are far too many errors in spelling/grammar. Does not use specified referencing system Very poor presentation

Grade descriptors for Level 5 written work		
Mark range	**characteristic**	**criteria**
90-100	Exceptional Pass	Exemplary attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates an exceptional grasp of key concepts with comprehensive application to a specific area of study Offers an exhaustive exploration of the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is highly sophisticated The writing style is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
80-89	Outstanding Pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an exemplary standard Demonstrates an outstanding grasp of key concepts with comprehensive application to a specific area of study Extends far beyond expected levels of engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is generally very astute The writing style is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
70-79	Excellent pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates an excellent grasp of key concepts with wide-ranging application to a specific area of study Thorough use the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive and there are very perceptive elements The writing style is highly advanced Only minor errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
60-69	Good Pass	Good attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a good grasp of key concepts with generally sound application to a specific area of study Good consideration of the literature and evidence-base that develops from recommended readings The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive The writing style is well clear and readable, with some sophisticated phrasing Only minor errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
50-59	Clear Pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an good standard Demonstrates a good grasp of key concepts with limited application to a specific area of study

		Sufficient consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but little consideration beyond recommended readings The material covered is mostly accurate and relevant The argument is straightforward and relatively clear The writing style is clear and readable. Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles Generally well presented and organised, but does not always conform to conventions of academic presentation
40-49	Threshold / satisfactory pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a reasonable grasp of key concepts with limited application to a specific area of study Basic consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but restricted to recommended readings There are some inaccuracies or irrelevant materials, but there is sufficient accurate material to suggest a threshold level of understanding The argument is relatively clear, although some elements are difficult to understand The writing style is reasonable and there are very few areas of confusion and/or errors in spelling/grammar. Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles Good presentation that may include some organisational errors and/or tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation
30-39	Needs improvement	Meets most, but not all learning outcomes Demonstrates a reasonable grasp of key concepts, but no application to a specific area of study Minor consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but inadequate use of recommended reading and no exploration outside that. Some materials is accurate, but the amount of inaccurate or irrelevant materials indicates insufficient understanding of key concepts The argument is poorly defined and defended Writing style is acceptable. The structure is reasonable, but there are some areas of confusion and/or some errors in spelling/grammar Attempts to use of the specified referencing system. Meets key principles, but there are systematic errors Acceptable presentation that may include some organisational errors and a tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation
20-29	Needs significant revision	Does not meet most learning outcomes Demonstrates a poor grasp of key concepts with no application to a specific area of study Superficial consideration of the literature and evidence-base There are major inaccuracies or significant amounts of irrelevant The argument is very weak Writing style tends to be weak. The structure is confused and/or there are numerous errors in spelling/grammar. Attempts to use the specified referencing system, but there are significant errors

		Generally weak or untidy presentation that may include some organisational errors and does not to conform to conventions of academic presentation
0-19	Needs substantial work	Does not meet any learning outcomes Demonstrates a fundamentally flawed understanding of key concepts No engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is inaccurate or irrelevant The argument is incoherent Writing style is poor. The structure is disorganised and/or there are too many errors in spelling/grammar. Does not use specified referencing system Weak or untidy presentation

Grade descriptors for Level 6 written work		
Mark range	**characteristic**	**criteria**
90-100	Exceptional Pass	Exemplary attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a systematic understanding of subject specific material with evidence of highly sophisticated analysis of concepts Wide-ranging emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Offers an exhaustive exploration of the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is highly sophisticated The writing style is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
80-89	Outstanding Pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an exemplary standard Demonstrates a systematic understanding of subject specific material with evidence of thorough analysis of concepts Wide-ranging emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Extends far beyond expected levels of engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is generally very astute The writing style is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
70-79	Excellent pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a systematic understanding of subject specific material with evidence of thorough analysis of concepts Strong emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Thorough use the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive and there are very perceptive elements The writing style is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
60-69	Good Pass	Good attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a systematic understanding of subject specific material with evidence of good analysis of concepts Good emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Good consideration of the literature and evidence-base that develops from recommended readings The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive The writing style is highly advanced

		No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
50-59	Clear Pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an good standard Demonstrates a logical understanding of subject specific material with evidence of some analysis of concepts Some emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Sufficient consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but little consideration beyond recommended readings The material covered is mostly accurate and relevant The argument is straightforward and relatively clear The writing style is well clear and readable, with some sophisticated phrasing Only minor errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style
40-49	Threshold / satisfactory pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a logical understanding of subject specific material with evidence of some analysis of concepts Some emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Basic consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but restricted to recommended readings There are some inaccuracies or irrelevant materials, but there is sufficient accurate material to suggest a threshold level of understanding The argument is relatively clear, although some elements are difficult to understand The writing style is clear and readable. Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles Generally well presented and organised, but does not always conform to conventions of academic presentation
30-39	Needs improvement	Meets most, but not all learning outcomes Demonstrates understanding of subject specific material, but with little analysis of concepts Little emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Minor consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but inadequate use of recommended reading and no exploration outside that. Some materials is accurate, but the amount of inaccurate or irrelevant materials indicates insufficient understanding of key concepts The argument is poorly defined and defended The writing style is reasonable and there are very few areas of confusion and/or errors in spelling/grammar. Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles Good presentation that may include some organisational errors and/or tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation

20-29	Needs significant revision	Does not meet most learning outcomes Demonstrates understanding of subject specific material, but no analysis of concepts Little or no emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Superficial consideration of the literature and evidence-base There are major inaccuracies or significant amounts of irrelevant The argument is very weak Writing style is acceptable. The structure is reasonable, but there are some areas of confusion and/or some errors in spelling/grammar Attempts to use of the specified referencing system. Meets key principles, but there are systematic errors Acceptable presentation that may include some organisational errors and a tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation
0-19	Needs substantial work	Does not meet any learning outcomes Demonstrates confusion over subject specific material and no analysis of concepts No emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline No engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is inaccurate or irrelevant The argument is incoherent Writing style tends to be weak. The structure is confused and/or there are numerous errors in spelling/grammar. Attempts to use the specified referencing system, but there are significant errors Generally weak or untidy presentation that may include some organisational errors and does not to conform to conventions of academic presentation

Grade descriptors for Level 7 written work – 2016-17

Please note that these level 7 descriptors apply to programmes validated for a 2016 – 17 start when level 7 modules will have a pass mark of 50% (including those that form part of UG Masters programmes).

Mark range	**characteristic**	**Criteria**
90-100	Exceptional Pass	Exemplary attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates an outstanding synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area Wide-ranging emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Offers an exhaustive exploration of the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is highly sophisticated The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.
80-89	Outstanding Pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an exemplary standard Demonstrates a comprehensive synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. Wide-ranging emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Extends far beyond expected levels of engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is generally very astute The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.
70-79	Excellent pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a thorough synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area Strong emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Thorough use the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive and there are very perceptive elements The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.
60-69	Good Pass	Good attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates detailed synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area Good emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline

		Good consideration of the literature and evidence-base that develops from recommended readings The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.
50-59	Pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a limited, but sufficient, synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area Some emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Sufficient consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but little consideration beyond recommended readings The material covered is mostly accurate and relevant The argument is straightforward and relatively clear The standard of writing is well clear and readable, with some sophisticated phrasing No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.
40-49	Needs some improvement	Meets most, but not all learning outcomes Demonstrates limited synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area Less than expected emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Basic consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but restricted to recommended readings Some inaccuracies or irrelevant materials that suggest confusion and misunderstanding The argument is relatively clear, although some elements are difficult to understand The standard of writing is well clear and readable, but overly simplistic Minor errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles Well-presented and organised in an appropriate academic style.
30-39	Needs major improvement	Approximately half the learning outcomes are met Demonstrates very little synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area Little emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Minor consideration of the literature and evidence-base, with inadequate use of recommended reading and no exploration outside that Some materials is accurate, but the amount of inaccurate or irrelevant materials indicates insufficient understanding of key concepts The argument is poorly defined and defended The standard of writing is mostly clear and readable Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system, but meets key principles Generally well presented and organised, but does not always conform to conventions of academic presentation.

20-29	Needs significant revision	Most learning outcomes are not met Demonstrates no synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area Little or no emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Superficial consideration of the literature and evidence-base There are major inaccuracies or significant amounts of irrelevant material The argument is very weak The standard of writing is reasonable and there are very few areas of confusion and/or errors in spelling/grammar Attempts to use of the specified referencing system. Meets key principles, but there are systematic errors Good presentation that may include some organisational errors and/or tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation.
0-19	Needs substantial work	Does not meet any learning outcomes Demonstrates misunderstanding of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area No emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline No engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is inaccurate or irrelevant The argument is incoherent Standard of writing is acceptable. The structure is reasonable, but there are some areas of confusion and/or some errors in spelling/grammar Attempts to use the specified referencing system, but there are significant errors Acceptable presentation that may include some organisational errors and a tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation.

Grade descriptors for Level 7 written work These apply to L7 programmes where delivery of the programme of study began prior to 2016-17.		
Mark range	**characteristic**	**Criteria**
90-100	Exceptional Pass	Exemplary attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates an outstanding synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. Wide-ranging emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Offers an exhaustive exploration of the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is highly sophisticated The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and formatted in an appropriate academic style
80-89	Outstanding Pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an exemplary standard Demonstrates a comprehensive synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. Wide-ranging emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Extends far beyond expected levels of engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is generally very astute The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and formatted in an appropriate academic style
70-79	Excellent pass	Excellent attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a thorough synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. Strong emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Thorough use the literature and evidence-base The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive and there are very perceptive elements The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and formatted in an appropriate academic style
60-69	Good Pass	Good attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates detailed synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. Good emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Good consideration of the literature and evidence-base that develops from recommended readings The material covered is accurate and relevant The argument is persuasive The standard of writing is refined No errors in the use of the specified referencing system

		Well-presented and formatted in an appropriate academic style
50-59	Moderate Pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes, with some met to an good standard Demonstrates a limited, but sufficient, synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. However, some of these are subject to a more comprehensive analysis Some emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Sufficient consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but little consideration beyond recommended readings The material covered is mostly accurate and relevant The argument is straightforward and relatively clear The standard of writing is highly advanced No errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and formatted in an appropriate academic style
40-49	Threshold pass	Adequate attainment of all learning outcomes Demonstrates a limited, but sufficient synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area Some emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Basic consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but restricted to recommended readings There are some inaccuracies or irrelevant materials, but there is sufficient accurate material to suggest a threshold level of understanding The argument is relatively clear, although some elements are difficult to understand The standard of writing is well clear and readable, with some sophisticated phrasing Only minor errors in the use of the specified referencing system Well-presented and formatted in an appropriate academic style
30-39	Needs improvement	Meets most, but not all learning outcomes Demonstrates very little synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. Little emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline Minor consideration of the literature and evidence-base, but inadequate use of recommended reading and no exploration outside that. Some materials is accurate, but the amount of inaccurate or irrelevant materials indicates insufficient understanding of key concepts The argument is poorly defined and defended The standard of writing is clear and readable Some errors in the use of the specified referencing system , but meets key principles Generally well presented and formatted, but does not always conform to conventions of academic presentation
20-29	Needs significant revision	Does not meet most learning outcomes Demonstrates no synthesis of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. Little or no emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline

		Superficial consideration of the literature and evidence-base There are major inaccuracies or significant amounts of irrelevant The argument is very weak The standard of writing is reasonable and there are very few areas of confusion and/or errors in spelling/grammar. Attempts to use of the specified referencing system. Meets key principles, but there are systematic errors Good presentation that may include some formatting errors and/or tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation
0-19	Needs substantial work	Does not meet any learning outcomes Demonstrates misunderstanding of varied theoretical positions in the analysis of key issues in the subject area. No emphasis on knowledge and ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline No engagement with the literature and evidence-base The material covered is inaccurate or irrelevant The argument is incoherent Standard of writing is acceptable. The structure is reasonable, but there are some areas of confusion and/or some errors in spelling/grammar Attempts to use of the specified referencing system , but there are significant errors Acceptable presentation that may include some formatting errors and a tendency not to conform to conventions of academic presentation